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From: **THE NEW YORK STEM CELL FOUNDATION**

Rubenstein Communications, Inc.
Adam Pockriss – 212.843.8286; apockriss@rubenstein.com

Gaia Strategies
Kendall Christiansen -- 718.941.9535; kendall@gaiastrategies.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK STEM CELL FOUNDATION PLAYING CRITICAL ROLE IN NEW EFFORT TO CREATE DIABETES-SPECIFIC EMBRYONIC STEM CELL LINES

-- Privately-Funded "Safe Haven" Laboratory Facilitates Collaboration Between Harvard and Columbia Researchers --

(NEW YORK, NY – June 6, 2006) – The New York Stem Cell Foundation's (NYSCF) privately-funded laboratory is playing a pivotal role in a research initiative announced today in which scientists at Harvard University's Stem Cell Institute (HSCI) will use the Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) technique to create diabetes and other disease-specific stem cell lines. If successful, the experiments will mark a major step forward in the effort to use stem cells to understand the development of, and eventually treat, a range of chronic diseases affecting tens of millions of people. This is believed to be the first non-commercial research initiative in the United States to use human embryonic stem cells in a series of experiments whose principle has already been proven in animals. Due to strict federal restrictions on human embryonic stem cell research, the research is being supported exclusively with private funds.

NYSCF will be involved with the first nuclear transfer experiments, in which HSCI researchers Douglas Melton and Kevin Eggan will attempt to create diabetes-specific stem cells. Melton and Eggan will remove the nuclei from skin cells taken from volunteers at the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center at the Columbia University Medical Center and insert them into donor eggs from which the nuclei have been removed. A critical aspect of the research process -- growing somatic cells in cell culture -- will take place at the NYSCF lab. Because NYSCF's "safe-haven" lab does not receive any federal support, it can be used to conduct research involving human embryonic stem cells beyond the limited NIH-approved stem cell lines.

"We are proud to be able to facilitate this collaboration between two world-class medical research institutions in an initiative that represents the most advanced work that can be done right now in stem cell research," said Susan L. Solomon, co-founder and CEO of NYSCF. "Our participation in this project exemplifies our commitment to stem cell research opportunities that translate basic research into clinical applications so that medical progress can be accelerated. Given the considerable limits imposed on stem cell research by current federal policy, private funding is essential to bringing the best scientists together and providing the means to move this advanced research forward as quickly as possible."

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"We're deeply appreciative for the fact that the New York Stem Cell Foundation is providing facilities for this collaborative effort which holds the potential of leading to new treatments for patients suffering from diabetes and many other diseases," said Dr. Melton, co-director of the Harvard Stem Cell Institute.

"The New York Stem Cell Foundation is playing a crucial role in enabling this collaboration. Without funding from NYSCF and the creation of this lab, our work in this area would have been impossible," said Dr. Robin Goland, M.D., co-director of the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center and associate professor of medicine at Columbia University Medical Center. "This collaboration is a model for private support of academic research and will pave the way for future partnerships with NYSCF."

"SCNT holds tremendous promise for helping us to achieve a new level of understanding about some of the most devastating diseases of our time," said Dr. Eggan, Assistant Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology at Harvard University. "NYSCF's role in this research initiative is critical to our efforts."

"We believe that this concentration on 'bench to bedside' research, focusing on diseases where stem cell therapy shows the most promise, will most effectively advance the search for cures to many major diseases of our time," said Mary Elizabeth Bunzel, co-founder and executive vice president of NYSCF.

SCNT involves removing nuclei that contain the cellular DNA from egg cells and replacing them with the nuclei of donor cells. The resulting cell is then subject to a chemical or electrical charge that triggers cell division and the creation of an embryo genetically identical to the donor of the nuclei.

About The New York Stem Cell Foundation

Founded in 2005, the New York Stem Cell Foundation (NYSCF) is a privately-funded initiative dedicated to furthering human embryonic stem cell research to advance the search for cures of the major diseases of our time. The foundation created its first privately-funded laboratory in May 2006 to serve as a "safe haven" where scientists from academic medical centers in the New York area and throughout the East Coast can conduct advanced human embryonic stem cell research free of the federal restrictions that limit the scope of government-supported work. The organization's missions are to create state-of-the-art collaborative research laboratories supported entirely with private funds, to educate the public about the importance and potential benefits of human embryonic stem cell research (hESC) and somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), and to support stem cell research through grants to scientists working in their own labs, fellowships, symposia and journals. For more information, please visit www.nyscf.org.

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