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Stem Cell research conference to be held at OU May 9-11

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

The **First Midwest Conference on Stem Cell Biology and Therapy** will be held at Oakland University May 9-11. The conference will bring national and international experts in stem cell research to campus to explore recent findings in stem cell research and address the ethical and political issues associated with it. Professor of Biological Sciences, Rasul Chaudhry, was instrumental in organizing the conference, which will be attended by researchers from hospitals, medical organizations, and academic institutions throughout the country.

Chaudhry has been working on stem cell research at Oakland University for nearly six years. His focus is on embryonic and umbilical cord blood stem cells. Last summer, he had an idea to bring a small group of stem cell researchers together for a conference. After more discussion with others at OU and researchers from Beaumont and Providence Hospitals, where Chaudhry does collaborative research, it was decided the conference should be open to those who want to learn more about stem cell research.

With the support of OU's administration, faculty colleagues, and the help of his graduate student Jaime Brozowski, Chaudhry began planning the First Midwest Conference on Stem Cell Biology and Therapy, which was met with much support from the research community.

To garner the funding needed to host such a conference, Chaudhry enlisted the help of local organizations and the campus community. The conference is sponsored jointly by Oakland University and Beaumont Hospitals, in cooperation with St. John Health Providence Hospital, Sigma Life Science, BioSpherix, Blackstone Medical, Center for Organogenesis at the University of Michigan, American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) and Oakland University's College of Arts and Sciences, School of Health Sciences and School of Nursing.

The keynote speakers will be Andras Nagy, of Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto and United State Senator Carl Levin. Nagy is an expert in stem cell and mouse genetic research and will present "Mouse Genetics: The Changing Landscape." Levin is the most supportive member of the U.S. Congress for stem cell research, and he will speak at the conference dinner on May 10. More than 30 speakers will make presentations throughout the conference. In addition, a special workshop session will be held for students, medical residents and others interested in attending.

The conference is open to the public. Those from the medical field, physicians, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists and others can earn Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for their attendance.

"All of our presenters are experts in their areas of stem cell research," said Chaudhry. "Through this conference, we can show that Oakland is a great institution involved in cutting edge biomedical research. This is a chance to show the high-caliber research efforts that are going on at OU and recognize the efforts of our faculty."

"There is a vast opportunity in this area for stem cell research. This conference is a great way to showcase, not only Oakland University, but the strength of academics and research in Michigan as a whole," Brozowski said.

Attendee registration for the conference is underway. Early registration runs through March 17 and is \$200 for the public and \$100 for students, residents or post-doctoral students. Registration after March 17 is \$225 for the public and \$125 for students, medical residents or post-doctoral students. Optional workshops are \$50 and the optional golf outing is \$100. Sponsorship opportunities are still available.

For more information on the First Midwest Conference on Stem Cell Biology and Therapy, visit the **conference** Web site.

SUMMARY

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