Professional Ethics Report

AAAS
ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

Publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Scientific Freedom, Responsibility & Law Program in collaboration with theCommittee on Scientific Freedom & Responsibility, Professional Society Ethics Group

VOLUME XVII NUMBER 4 Fall 2004

STEM CELL AND CLONING POLICY: ARE STATE LAWS THE SOLUTION?

By Melanie Roberts

Ms. Roberts *is a Ph.D. candidate in Neurobiology & Behavior at the University of Washington. Her laboratory receives funding from a $3.2M federal grant to UW for hESC research. She is the founder and co-director of the Forum on Science, Ethics and Policy, a multidisciplinary nonpartisan organization of students and postdocs that is committed to stimulating dialogue among local scientists, the public, and policy makers about the impact of science on society.*

A piecemeal approach to stem cell policy

President Bush declared on August 9, 2001, that the federal government would fund research only on human embryonic stem cell (hESC) lines that had been derived before that time. Many scientists complain that the limited number and inferior quality of the twenty-two available lines that are eligible for federal funding hinder scientific progress and patient advocacy groups worry that treatments are being delayed.[1]

There are no indications that the second Bush Administration will revise its stem cell policy. Furthermore, even if the restrictions on federal funding of hESC research were relaxed, there are still two large regulatory gaps in the current U.S. policy that trouble both supporters and detractors of hESC research. The first gap is the absence of federal policies regulating stem cell research which is conducted with non-federal dollars. The second is that there is no ban on human reproductive cloning, even though such a ban is supported by a vast majority of Americans.[2]

State laws could potentially fill existing policy gaps and catalyze a change in federal policy.[3] However, not all are convinced that a state-by-state approach is the best method for modifying stem cell policy. US Representative Michael Castle (R-DE) believes that "we must continue to work to expand the current federal policy governing [stem cell] research, because a piecemeal [state] approach is not the solution".[4] Yet, dissatisfaction with the federal policy is leading to just such an approach. In 2004 alone, 32 states considered 106 bills involving hESC and cloning research.[5] The repercussions of state laws governing basic research must be carefully considered so that this piecemeal approach does not cause more harm than good.

State regulation of research

One result of most state legislative efforts would be a ban on human reproductive cloning. Although possibility of giving birth to a cloned baby is remote, such a ban would further decrease the likelihood. A ban on reproductive cloning would also benefit scientists, since blame for any attempt would belong to the rogue researcher and not to the scientific community as a whole.

Most scientists support a law that prohibits reproductive cloning but specifically allows a laboratory technique called somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT)[6] to produce new stem cell lines.[7] This technique, which replaces the DNA from a human egg with DNA from another person, is the first step in making either genetically matched hESCs for potential disease treatments or in making a blastocyst that might develop into a cloned baby if implanted into a woman's uterus.

Three states have enacted a law that outlaws reproductive cloning and protects SCNT: California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. However, most state bills have proposed a ban on SCNT along with reproductive cloning. Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan, and North Dakota already have passed laws prohibiting SCNT. Furthermore, 32 of the state bills considered in 2004 would have banned SCNT, whereas only 22 would have protected SCNT.

Some states are also attempting to regulate privately funded hESC research, since no federal policy does so. California and New Jersey's current laws, which expressly encourage stem cell research, provide a regulatory framework for informed consent by blastocyst donors and for oversight of hESC research conducted with funding from any source. These laws also create an advisory committee composed of scientists, ethicists, law experts, and citizens to devise responsible hESC research guidelines. Other states

(**Stem Cells** continued on page 2)

(**Stem Cells** continued from page 1)

considering similar laws include Washington, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.[8]

State legislators hope that these regulatory laws will encourage private investment in hESC research.[9] Currently, few companies are openly conducting research on hESCs because 1) the controversy could be bad for business, and 2) potential cures and profits are too uncertain and too many years in the future to attract investors. It is possible that a well-written state policy that ensures transparency and oversight could help to move hESC research forward in the private sector by making the public and investors more confident that the research is progressing in an acceptable fashion. On the other hand, it is possible that legislation intending to promote hESC research may actually hinder it if the regulatory burden is too great. These purely regulatory policies are unlikely to stimulate hESC research in academic laboratories, which rely primarily on federal funding and must adhere to federal policies regarding hESC research.

Editor: Mark S. Frankel
Deputy Editor: Kristina Schaefer
Contributing Authors: Tova Jacobovits, Adrianne Kroepsch, Kari McCarron

The *Professional Ethics Report* is published quarterly by the Scientific Freedom, Responsibility and Law Program in collaboration with the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility and the Professional Society Ethics Group, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 326-6217; Fax (202) 289-4950; E-mail: kschaefe@aaas.org; WWW *http://www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/sfrl/sfrl.htm.* Back issues of *Professional Ethics Report* are now on-line at *http://www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/sfrl/per/per.htm*

A new experiment: State funding for basic research

Purely regulatory legislation apparently did not stimulate hESC research by an appreciable amount in either the public or private sector in New Jersey or California, since both states have recently dedicated state funds specifically to stimulate hESC research. New York and Wisconsin are also considering allocating state funding for hESC research. But it is California's recently approved voter initiative – Proposition 71 - that could have a transforming effect on stem cell research, and possibly on our current model of basic research funding.

Last month, Californians voted by a convincing 59 to 41 percent to commit $3 billion in state funds over ten years specifically to hESC research.[10] There is no doubt that this financial investment will be an immediate boon to hESC research, since the proposed $295 million yearly investment is greater than the total 2004 expenditures of both the U.S. government ($25 million) and venture capital investments in private companies ($147.52 million).[11] California's $3 billion experiment is sure to make a large impact on hESC research, but some of the repercussions could be both unexpected and possibly detrimental to basic science research in the long run.[12]

Supporters of Proposition 71 hope that the research breakthroughs of California researchers will lead to disease treatments. But a key justification for Proposition 71 was economic. Proponents assert that the revenue generated by job creating and royalties from scientific discoveries will more than pay for the initial investment.[13] If California funds lead to a treatment for a disease like Parkinson's or diabetes, this may be true. But if the massive California effort does not lead to cures, not only may the public lose money, but they may also lose their optimism about the benefits of scientific research in general.

Letters to the Editor: The editors welcome comments from our readers. We reserve the right to edit and abridge letter as space permits. Please address all correspondence to the deputy editor.

Critics also question whether Proposition 71 establishes the necessary oversight that is required to ensure that funded research adheres to high ethical standards.[14,15] They argue that the "Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee," which is charged with governance of funding and research guidelines, is composed of researchers and patient advocates who may have a real or perceived conflict of interest in enforcing adherence to high ethical standards. Additionally, Proposition 71 takes the unusual step of amending the state constitution so that hESC research is a constitutional right and makes it nearly impossible for the state legislature to change the initiative. Thus, the citizens have little recourse if they feel that their investment is being used unwisely.

States: proceed with caution

State involvement in regulation and funding of basic research is relatively uncharted territory. Since World War II, basic research has been accepted as a charge of the federal government.[16] The recent bipartisan support for the NIH budget doubling suggests that most federal policy makers agree that this model isin the best interest of the United States. However, if individual states are willing to make large investments in basic research, the federal government may become less inclined to fund it. On the other hand, if investments move the research forward sufficiently to affirm the purported potential of hESCs to treat disease, then the federal government might

(**Stem Cells** continued on page 3)

(**Stem Cells** continued from page 2)
feel compelled to loosen restrictions on federal funding for hESC research.

The most effective legislation will reflect a basic understanding of process, and existing research oversight procedures. Laws that contain inaccurate scientific wording or fail to consider existing federal policy will likely be ineffective or counterproductive. Therefore, it is important that experts in each state – including scientists, bioethicists, institutional review board members, fertility clinic doctors, and business leaders – are involved in discussing legislative efforts with both state policy makers and groups that support or oppose such legislation. In New Jersey and California, scientists were intimately involved in the policy process for legislation that provided both regulatory guidelines and funding for stem cell research.

Getting involved in the policy process

In my state – Washington – scientists were largely unaware that the state legislature considered six bills on cloning and stem cell research in 2004. But this will change in 2005. Inspired partly by Daniel Yankelovich's call to action in "Winning Greater Influence for Science",[17] a group of graduate students started a grassroots effort to stimulate dialogue among scientists, the public, and policy makers.[18] In October, we hosted a public forum on stem cells for our community and a roundtable discussion among policy makers, scientists, business leaders, and others to discuss "Stem cell policy in Washington State."

The stem cell debate is an excellent opportunity to increase input of scientists in policy decisions. The most valuable lessons that scientists can teach are not about stem cell science specifically, but about the scientific process more broadly and about how to evaluate the credibility of scientific sources. Policy decisions, however, are not based on science alone. In a democracy, policy decisions require the support of the public. To maintain public trust in science, it is essential that research adheres to high ethical standards. Whether they come through the federal or state government, scientists should welcome further policies that prevent potential abuses while allowing promising research to move forward.

———————

[1] For review, see: Leeds, Hilary S. "Embryonic stem cells: current debate and future *directions." Professional Ethics Report, Summer 2004.*

[2] 83% are somewhat or strongly opposed to human reproductive cloning. Virginia Commonwealth University Life Sciences Survey, September 2004.

[3] A new federal law would preempt any state laws that conflicted with it. United States Constitution (Article IV, section 2).

[4] http://www.republicanmainstreet.org/news/news.asp-record_no=3079.htm

[5] "State Cloning Legislation 2004." Biotechnology Industry Organization Report. http://168.143.181.41/bio2/stategovrel/charts/StateCloningLegislation2004.doc

[6] SCNT is also called research cloning or therapeutic cloning.

[7] National Research Council. *Scientific and Medical Aspects of Human Reproductive Cloning*. National Academies Press: Washington, D.C., 2002.

[8] Genetics Legislation Database, National Council of State Legislatures. http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/genetics/geneticsDB.cfm. The Illinois legislature rejected a similar legislation by two votes on November 18, 2004.

[9] Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Rep. Shay Schual-Berke, Rep. Brian Sullivan. Permitting stem-cell research has many benefits, *Puget Sound Business Journal*, Feb. 27, 2004.

[10] California Legislative Analyst's Office nonpartisan assessment of Proposition 71. http://www.lao.ca.gov/ballot/2004/71_11_2004.htm

[11] According to Thomson Venture Economics/NVCA/PWC MoneyTree.

[12] Yamamoto, K. Bankrolling stem-cell research with California dollars. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 351:17, October 21, 2004.

[13] http://www.curesforcalifornia.com/financialdetails.php

[14] Fukuyama, F. "Big science, Big Giveaway." *Wall Street Journal,* Oct 25, 2004, p. A18.

[15] Sarewitz, D. "Stepping out of line in stem cell research; Proposition 71 would cut link between science and democracy," *Los Angeles Times,* Oct 25, 2004, p. B11.

[16] Vannevar Bush. Science - The Endless Frontier. A Report to the President. U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1945. Full text available at http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/vbush1945.htm

[17] *Issues in Science and Technology*, Summer 2003. http://www.issues.org/issues/19.4/yankelovich.html

[18] http://www.fosep.org

IN THE NEWS

CDC, ETHICS, AND THE FLU VACCINE SHORTAGE

On October 5, 2004, the Chiron Corporation's facility in the UK, the main supplier of the flu vaccine for the United States, notified the FDA that none of its flu vaccine would be available for distribution during the 2004-05 flu season, due to bacterial contamination, leaving the FDA a bit surprised and unprepared.[1]

The U.S. initially expected to receive 100 million flu vaccines before the shortage was announced. However, only 61 million vaccines were available, manufactured by Aventis Pasteur in France, and 3 million FluMist nasal spray manufactured by MedImmune.[2] The Centersfor Disease Control and Prevention took immediate steps to help establish priorities for the available vaccines among the most vulnerable candidates. It established the first permanent five-member ethics panel to assist state and local health officials with the various ethical issues they should consider when

(**News** continued on page 4)

(**News** continued from page 3)
deciding who has high-priority for the vaccine.[3] The CDC panel's list of high-priority candidates includes children six months to two years of age and their care-takers, women who will be pregnant during flu season (December through March), those between the age of two and sixty-four who have chronic medical conditions, health care workers who have direct patient care responsibilities, and nursing home residents.[4] The CDC ethics panel has also considered the life expectancy of different populations with and without the vaccine, and possible strategies to prevent vaccination shortages in the future.

The CDC vaccine allocation plan, aimed at those in the highest risk group, was announced in a press release November 9, 2004. It outlined the distribution of 10.3 million vaccines to states and territories in addition to the 4.2 million shipped to high-priority groups and health providers in October. Distribution of 3.1 million vaccines was based on three main factors: 1) The number of high-priority individuals in each state; 2) the number of doses the state had already received; and 3) the state's unmet needs. The remaining 7.2 million vaccines were to be distributed to states and territories to meet all original requests in federal and state contracts.[5] However, one month following the issued allocation plan, the vaccine has not been equally distributed across all states.

The CDC will loosen its immunization recommendations in areas where there is a surplus of the vaccine and recommends redistribution of the excess vaccines to areas with a shortage. The expanded recommendations will allow adults age 50-64 and close contacts of high risk persons to receive the vaccine beginning on January 3, 2005. This will provide enough time for current priority groups to get vaccinated, and it will enable health officials to plan for reaching new priority groups.[6] If the remaining supply of flu shots is not used, it will go to waste because the particular strain is only effective during this year's flu season.[7]

**TJ*

[1] FDA News Release, 2004 Chiron Flu Vaccine Chronology, October 16,2004. http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/chronology1016.html)
[2] David Brown, "U.S. Knew Last Year of Flue Vaccine Plant's Woes," *The Washington Post*, November 18, 2004.
[3] Jennifer Couzin, "Ethicist to Guide Rationing of Flu Vaccine," *The Washington Post*, November 5, 2004.
[4] CDC Press Release, "CDC and States Announce Plan to Distribute 10.3 Million Flu Shots Nationwide; Public Health Officials Call Allocation Fair and Aimed at Most Vulnerable Americans," November 9, 2004.
[5] CDC Press Release, "CDC and States Announce Plan to Distribute 10.3 Million Flu Shots Nationwide; Public Health Officials Call Allocation Fair and Aimed at Most Vulnerable Americans," November 9, 2004.
[6] CDC Press Release, "CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Expands Priority Groups for Inactivated Influenza Vaccination," December 17, 2004.
[7] The Associated Press, "U.S. Worries Flu Shots May Go to Waste," *The New York Times,* December 17, 2004.

EPA STUDY OF CHILDREN AND PESTICIDES INFLAMES SCIENTISTS, BIOETHICISTS

A flurry of internal protests by rank-and-file scientists at the EPA led to the recent freeze of a study targeted at exploring how children absorb pesticides and other household chemicals. The study had not yet commenced and is now on hold, pending review of its design by a panel of independent experts.

The ethics of the EPA experiment's design were called into question by scientists both inside and outside of the EPA. Of primary concern was the involvement of the industry-funded American Chemistry Council (ACC), which had agreed to sponsor $2 million of the approximate $9 million project cost. The results of the study would provide the EPA with the data needed to determine what is safe for kids. Funding from the ACC poses a conflict of interest that might erode the EPA's independence in chemical regulation research. Of utmost concern, however, would be the health and well-being of the infants and toddlers involved in the study.

Little is known about how pesticides get into children's bodies or what levels of pesticide exposure are safe for tots, yet finding answers to these research questions has proved to be ethically troublesome. The proposed EPA study is designed such that, in exchange for participating in the study for two years, the families of 60 children in Duval County, Florida, would be compensated $970, plus children's clothing and a video camera. Over the course of two years, parents would track what their children eat and do, while also keeping tabs on pesticides used in the home. Field teams would visit every 6 months to sample floors and other surfaces, and to collect and analyze urine for pesticide metabolites.

Critics called into question whether the design would exploit financially troubled families who might not weigh, or even understand, the dangers associated with pesticide exposure. The study does not require sustained pesticide use over the two-year period, only use at the outset of

(**News** continued on page 5)

(**News** continued from page 4)
the study. But in order to qualify for the project, low-income participants might continue to use pesticides in their homes or increase their use, unaware that pesticides have been linked to neurological problems, lung damage, and birth defects in children.

R. Alta Charo, a professor of bioethics at the University of Wisconsin at Madison's law and medical schools and co-author of a 2003 report on pesticide research by the National Academies, discussed with the *Washington Post* the ethical struggle of balancing the need to protect the interests of individual children against the goal of pursuing a broader scientific agenda. For financially struggling families, "where is the line between enticement and a godfather offer," Charo asked. "That is really troubling. We make these decisions over and over in public policy. This is one of those moments."

**AK*

NATIONAL ACADEMIES CONSIDER ETHICS GUIDELINES FOR EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

In mid-October at the National Academies, the Board on Life Sciences and the Board on Health Sciences Policy held a two-day workshop to develop ethics guidelines on human embryonic stem cell research. The workshop began with an overview of the science behind stem cell research, including an examination of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) and interspecies mixing, as well as a summary of current policies and regulations.

The second day of the workshop addressed many controversial questions. Dr. Ruth Faden of Johns Hopkins University spoke on acquiring informed consent for embryo donation. Questions arose over when and how consent is obtained, what constitutes meaningful consent, and how in vitro fertilization clinics are regulated.

SCNT, the derivation of stem cell lines, and chimeras led to further debate. Dr. Dan Brock of Harvard Medical School argued that a blastocyst derived through SCNT lacks the same moral status as a human being. Representing an opposing view, Dr. Leon Kass, chair of the President's Council on Bioethics, called for a three-year moratorium on SCNT to allow for public debate and advances in non-controversial research. Cell transfer between species produced even more ethical questions that many agreed require committee oversight.

Also discussed was the appropriate design of a system to regulate embryonic stem cell research. Dr. Laurie Zoloth of the Center for Genetic Medicine at Northwester University offered several options, from the use of a self-monitoring, independent oversight body to the use of an existing federal agency. A representative from the Biotechnology Industry Organization supported a regulatory body and recommended the Food and Drug Administration for that role. Regulation and many other embryonic stem cell issues will be addressed in the Academies guidelines, which are expected in February.

**KM*

IN-PERSON ETHICS TRAINING REQUIRED OF ALL NIH EMPLOYEES

In the past, ethics training for NIH employees was required only for a select few and could be completed via Internet learning modules. This October, however, NIH changed its policy by mandating ethics training across the board, to be completed in-person by all NIH employees before midnight on December 31, 2004.

In an all-points bulletin for NIH staff, Deputy Ethics Counselor, Raynard S. Kington, expanded on the thoughts behind the new requirement:

"Federal employees have a responsibility to the United States Government and the nation's citizens to place loyalty to its governing Constitution, laws, and ethical principles above private gain," wrote Kington. "To ensure that every citizen can have complete faith in the integrity of the federal government, each employee must respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct as articulated in our rules and regulations." The NIH's personal ethics training is intended to ensure that this is the case.

The training requirement familiarizes NIH employees with a) the formal ethics rules that govern conduct as a civil servant, b) the ability to identify ethical issues, and c) the skills to resolve ethical issues and awareness of how, where, and when to get help. According to the bulletin, each Institute and Center will provide multiple opportunities for staff to receive their in-person ethics training, to be facilitated by departmental Deputy Ethics Counselors.

**AK*

PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS: RACE AND GENETICS

Dr. Kathy Hudson, Director of the Genetics and Public Policy Center at the Johns Hopkins University, recently presented preliminary findings from a new study examining issues in race and genetics at the IMAGN! – Increasing Minority Awareness in Genetics Now conference. Convened by the Genetics and Public Policy Center in conjunction with the Congressional Black Caucus and Johns Hopkins University, the conference brought the weight of public opinion to bear on reproductive

(**News** continued on page 6)

(**News** continued from page 5)

genetic technologies, taking specific notice of the variation – and non-variation – of opinion across races.

The new study is the first of its kind to explore public attitudes toward genetics with special attention to race. It is a follow-up to the Center's 2002 study, which explored the knowledge and attitudes of 1,211 respondents about reproductive cloning, genetic testing, genetic modification, and preferences about government regulation. The 2004 edition, informed by 21 focus groups in five cities, is the largest survey ever of public attitudes toward genetic testing, boasting 4,834 participants nationwide.

The new survey measures the public's awareness and approval of reproductive genetic technologies, plus public views on the need for regulation of such technologies. According to Dr. Hudson, the survey hoped to address, among many other things, the "accepted wisdom that Black Americans tend to be more skeptical of genetic technologies than White Americans."

The preliminary survey results showed that, when it comes to reproductive genetic technologies, there is less difference between races than is typically assumed. Said Hudson in her presentation of the findings: "Culture transcends race, people aren't just black and white." According to the survey, while there are racial differences regarding awareness of cloning, IVF, genetic testing, and prenatal genetic testing, they are not dramatic. Approval of health-related reproductive genetic technologies (like pre-implantation genetic diagnosis or prenatal DNA testing) and agreement that scientific research is essential, were very similar across races.

According to Hudson, any significant racial differences manifested themselves in response patterns to questions about results-oriented reproductive testing and scientific control. White participants tended to be more disapproving than Black participants of trait-related reproductive genetic testing, yet more whites approved of reproductive cloning. Participants across all races were similarly trusting of the promise of science, but Black survey respondents were less trusting of the control of science and technology. When it came to clustering attitudinal patterns, there tends to be a much higher difference in attitudes between sexes than there is between races, noted Hudson, with females being generally more wary of trait-related reproductive genetic testing and more supportive of health-related reproductive testing than their male counterparts.

A formal report addressing the survey results in more depth and the 2002 survey results with interpretation can be found at the Genetics and Public Policy Center website, www.dnapolicy.org.

**AK*

VALENT CHEMICAL FIRM WINS SUIT AGAINST ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP

In September 2004, three employees from Valent U.S.A, a chemical firm which produces pesticides and herbicides in Martinez, California, sued the animal rights activist group, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty U.S.A (SHAC), claiming that the group's members harassed them on their property and posted the employees' personal contact information on the SHAC website. The suit was filed after employees found 30 to 60 animal rights demonstrators on their property at 3 a.m. one morning, using bullhorns, and wearing masks and hoods. Some activists had vandalized property and kicked down fences. Valent employees maintain that their names, addresses, and phone numbers were published on SHAC's website to target the demonstration locations. [1]

In November, a county judge issued a preliminary injunction against SHAC, prohibiting anyone associated with the group from entering the property of any Valent employee or their family members. In addition, specific names, addresses, and phone numbers must be removed from the SHAC website. The attorney representing SHAC, Christine Garcia, said that the injunction violates free speech, and that the information posted on the website is already available in public phone books. Garcia alleges that the names and addresses were posted only after the demonstrations had occurred. A hearing on whether or not the injunction will remain permanent will be determined at a court hearing set for January 6, 2005.[2]

Animal rights activism that borders on domestic terrorism is not a new phenomenon. Animal rights groups have employed extreme tactics since the 1970's. SHAC U.S.A is an American affiliate of an organization started in England in 1999. Its primary goal is to shut down Huntingdon Life Sciences, which contracts with many other companies, such as Chiron and Valent, to conduct animal testing services. Recently, activists have adopted more violent and ruthless tactics to halt the use of animals in research and testing, placing many companies' employees in danger of intimidation, vandalism, and harassment.[3] The FBI has responded to increasing domestic terrorism by establishing the National Task Force and Intelligence Center to develop and implement a nationwide campaign to address the animal rights/eco-terrorism threat in the United States.[4]

The Animal Enterprise Protection Act of 1992 (AEPA), in place to protect corporations and their employ-

(**News** continued on page 7)

(**News** continued from page 6)

ees from extreme activist tactics only provides penalties against those who engage in physical acts against the industries. It does not protect against the economic damage these industries suffer through threats and intimidation. Senator Orin Hatch (R-UT) is expected to introduce an amendment to the current AEPA that will expand protections in the Act to encompass the economic damages industries experience.

**TJ*

[1] Bruce Gerstman, "Chemical Firm Suing Animal Rights Group: Restraining Order Is Sought," *Mercury New,* November 2, 2004.
[2] Bruce Gerstman, "Animal Rights Group Loses Round," *Contra Costa Time,* November 16, 2004.
[3] Bruce Gerstman, "Chemical Firm Suing Animal Rights Group: Restraining Order Is Sought," *Mercury New,* November 2, 2004.
[4] Congressional Statement, Federal Bureau of Investigation, May 18, 2004.

IN THE SOCIETIES

AMA VOTES TO ELIMINATE CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSES IN CONTRACTS

In December 2004, the American Medical Association House of Delegates unanimously approved a resolution calling for the elimination of restrictive clauses in contracts between physician researchers and the industries that sponsor them. The resolution is rooted in an AMA Council of Scientific Affairs report documenting how such clauses have limited the dissemination of clinical trial methodologies and results from others within the medical research community, and how they have inhibited physicians from disclosing information to patients. The resolution is intended to make it easier for medical researchers and physicians to discuss the process and outcome of their studies with their colleagues, without consulting first with their funders, and to enable them to uphold the ethical obligation they have to their patients to discuss all matters concerning their medical care.

In the spirit of the resolution's mission "to protect the rights of physician researchers to present, publish and disseminate data from clinical trials,"[1] the AMA recommended creating a national registry of clinical trials. In addition, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, the American Academy of Pharmaceutical Physicians, and other organizations will work with the AMA to develop guidelines that would eliminate the use of confidential clauses that "interfere with scientific communication."[2]

The one major concern voiced by the pharmaceutical industry is that data from only a few trials in a multi-trial endeavor would be discussed too early, which might not reflect an accurate final outcome and create false expectations among patients.

**TJ*

[1] American Medical Association House of Delegates, Resolution 610 (I-04), "Physicians and clinical Trials." http://www.ama-assn.org/
[2] Ibid.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vacancy Announcement – The **Office of Research Integrity** is recruiting a Health Science Administrator for its Division of Education and Integrity. The application deadline is **January 7, 2005**. The full announcement can be viewed at http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/etjob.asp?JobID=25128695&AVSDM=2004%2D11%2D14+16%3A00%3A45&Logo=0&coldltc&cy=&brd=3876&lid=&fn=&q=Health+Science.

Call for abstracts – Abstracts are now being accepted for the fourth Ethics and Social Responsibility in Engineering and Technology Conference, co-hosted by **Gonzaga University and Loyola Marymount University**. The theme for the conference, to be held in Los Angeles June 9-10, 2005, is "Linking Workplace Ethics and Education." The submission deadline is **January 8, 2005**. For more information, visit http://www.gonzaga.edu/engineeringethics.

Call for abstracts – Abstracts are now being accepted for the fourth Ethics and Social Responsibility in Engineering and Technology Conference, co-hosted by **Gonzaga University and Loyola Marymount University**. The theme for the conference, to be held in Los Angeles June 9-10, 2005, is "Linking Workplace Ethics and Education." The submission deadline is **January 8, 2005**. For more information, visit http://www.gonzaga.edu/engineeringethics.

Summit – **Fordham University** will hold a summit on Biopharmaceuticals for the 21st Century: Responsibility, Sustainability & Public Trust on January 10-11, 2005. The forum is the first of a series of roundtables to identify challenges and generate recommendations for a socially responsible and sustainable healthcare/research industry. More information is available at http://www.fordhamethics.org/pharmcon.htm.

Call for abstracts – ***JAMA*** and ***BMJ*** invite abstracts for the Fifth International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication, to be held September 15-17, 2005. Abstracts focusing on any aspect of editorial peer review, scientific publication, and the dissemination of

(**Announcements** continued on page 8)

(**Announcements** continued from page 7)

scientific information will be considered. The deadline for submissions is **January 15, 2005**. For more information, contact Annette Flanagin, jama-peer@jama-archives.org; Jane Smith, jsmith@bmj.org; or visit, http://www.jama-peer.org.

Call for Abstracts – Abstracts are invited for **ETHICOMP 2005**, the eighth conference in the ETHICOMP series, to be held September 12-15, 2005 at Linköping University, Sweden, in collaboration with the Royal Institute of Technology. The conference theme is "Looking Back to the Future." Abstracts of 700-1000 words will be accepted via email to ccsr@dmu.ac.uk until **February 1, 2005**. More information can be found at http://www.ccsr.cse.dmu.ac.uk.

Call for Abstracts – The **American Society of Bioethics and Humanities** and the **Albany Medial College/Graduate College of Union Univer-sity Bioethics Program** invite abstracts of papers to be presented at an international conference on The Ethics of Bioethics, to be held April 7-9, 2005. The deadline for submissions is **February 15, 2005**. For more information, visit http://www.bioethics.union.edu.

Request for Proposals — The Amerian Assocation of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is soliciting grant applications for a program funded by the Office of Research Integrity (ORI), designed to encourage academic and scientific societies in developing initiatives related to the responsible conduct of research. The deadline for applications is **March 4, 2005**. More information can be found at http://www.aamc.org/ori.

Funding Competition – The **National Science Foundation** is accepting grant proposals for the Ethics Education in Science and Engineering program. The focus of the program this year is on improving ethics education for graduate students and on ethical issues that arise in graduate research and education. Full proposals are due **March 10, 2005**. The NSF solicitation, 05-532, can be found at http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?nsf05532, and periodic updates on the competition are located at http://www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm.

Summer Institute – The **Ethics Institute of Dartmouth College** announces a summer institute for faculty at liberal arts colleges who are interested in developing a course on the ethical, legal and social implications (ELSI) of the Human Genome Project. Three sessions of the institute will be held: June 12-17, 2005 at Howard University, and July 24-29 and July 31-August 5, 2005 at Dartmouth College. Visit http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ethics for more information.

Support From the Following Societies and Organizations is Gratefully Acknowledged:

American Anthropological Association
American Association of University Professors
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Psychological Society
American Society for Engineering Education
American Sociological Association
Botanical Society of America