Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics
University of Minnesota
Mayo Clinic

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June 23, 2021

The Honorable Tim Walz
Office of the Governor & Lt. Governor
Room 130 State Capitol
75 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

A model of collaboration for 18 years, the Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics (the Partnership) has brought together researchers from the University of Minnesota and Mayo Clinic to advance research aimed at improving the economic and human health of our state. The 2020 Legislature demonstrated its continued support of the Partnership by authorizing the base appropriation of roughly $8 million annually.

Research in cancer, SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), and gene editing dominated the Partnership's research grant program in 2020. Six projects were awarded roughly $6.5 million to research new treatments for disease and develop novel diagnostics. The projects include:

- In utero gene editing for severe or fatal genetic disorders of metabolism
- Developing vaccination regimens that generate immunity for SARS-CoV-2
- Tools to assess DNA methyltransferase covalent complex formation
- Development and clinical testing of oncolytic viruses against spontaneous malignant melanomas
- Dual targeting signaling pathways to enhance the therapeutic efficacy for endocrine resistant breast cancer
- A novel clinical trial studying a drug target for potential COVID-19 prevention and treatment

Finally, $3 million of current year and previous year funds were allocated to the Translational Product Development Fund, which supports the advancement of projects with potential to be commercialized, such as projects that aim to form a start-up company or create a license agreement with a commercial entity. This program is facilitated in cooperation with each institution's Clinical and Translational Science Award from the NIH.

Partnership awards have led to successful licensing, patents and commercialization of discoveries including therapies for glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, type 2 diabetes, congestive heart failure, fungal infections, Alzheimer's disease, and various cancers. As of 2020 there have been at least 73 patent filings, 16 patent filings still pending, and 15 issued patents. This involves more than 31 new technologies stemming from Partnership-funded projects, with 8 currently licensed to existing companies, and two start-up companies (CoreBiome, Inc. and Qlaris).

If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact us or our legislative staff, Kelly Mellberg at 262.960.4000 or Kate Johansen at 651.900.3482. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gregory Gores, M.D.
Executive Dean for Research
Mayo Clinic

Jakub Tolar, M.D., Ph.D.
Dean of the Medical School / Vice President for Clinical Affairs
University of Minnesota

cc: Senator David Tomassoni, Chair, Higher Education Finance and Policy
Representative Connie Bernardy, Chair, Higher Education Finance and Policy Division