

**University of Minnesota**

**Human Fetal Tissue Research**

**Report to the Minnesota Legislature  
2024**

# **University of Minnesota Human Fetal Tissue Research**

## **Report of the Minnesota Legislature**

As required by Minnesota Statute 137.47 which went into effect on July 1, 2017.

### **Submitted by:**

Board of Regents

### **Prepared by:**

The report was prepared by staff in the Office of Academic Clinical Affairs with the assistance of staff in the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Minnesota.

### **Report Preparation Costs:**

Per the requirements set forth in Minnesota Statute 3.197, the cost to prepare this report was \$300.

**Purpose:**

During the 2017 Minnesota legislative session, a law was passed requiring the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota to submit an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the higher education policy and finance, health and human services, and human services policy and finance committees. The report is required to disclose specific information regarding university research projects which access donated human fetal tissue (reporting requirements noted below).

**Background:**

In February 2016, the University of Minnesota instituted new requirements for researchers accessing donated human fetal tissue. Oversight of human fetal tissue research became administered jointly by the Office of the Vice President of Research and the Vice President of the Academic Health Center (since renamed the ‘Office of Academic Clinical Affairs’).

Per the new requirements, researchers requesting to access human fetal tissue were required to apply for permission to conduct research using human fetal tissue from the Fetal Tissue Research Committee (FTR) prior to commencing their studies. Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) continued to be required if the research project met the criteria established under federal law.

The Anatomy Bequest Program, a university anatomical donation program, became responsible for the acquisition, tracking and final disposition of the tissue.

In January 2018, the University of Minnesota updated the fetal tissue policies to reflect the new requirements associated with the enactment of Minnesota Statute 137.47. The revisions also broadened the scope of the policies to include educational uses, clarified the responsibilities of researchers, delineated newly required duties among the administrative units, and provided an opportunity to make housekeeping changes.

Additionally, the January 2018 revisions specifically exempted from review “the use of cell lines derived from human fetal tissue that historically have been available and are widely used and distributed on a national basis.” In 2018, the University’s fetal tissue research policies in place at the time underwent a comprehensive review by the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

**Report Requirements:**

Per the requirements of Minnesota Statute 137.47, the following information must be included in this report: all fetal tissue research proposals submitted to the FTR or IRB, including any written narrative required under 137.47, subd.2; whether the research proposal involved aborted fetal tissue; action by the FTR or IRB on all fetal tissue research proposals, including whether the proposal was approved by the FTR or IRB; and a list of all new or ongoing fetal tissue research projects at the university. The list must include the date the project was approved by the FTR or

IRB, the source of funding for the project, the goal or purpose of the project, whether the fetal tissue used is aborted fetal tissue or non-aborted fetal tissue, the source of the fetal tissue used, references to any publicly available information about the project, and references to any publications resulting from the project.

**New Fetal Tissue Research Requests Submitted to the Fetal Tissue Research Committee and/or the Institutional Review Board:**

There were no new research requests involving access to donated human fetal tissue submitted to the FTR or IRB in 2023.

**Previously Reported Research Update:**

All other previously reported research projects were either never initiated or were discontinued prior to 2023.