

February 14, 2014

Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
1st National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E-200
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351

Dear Commissioner Sieben:

Now in its 11th year, the Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics (the Partnership) has been a model for collaboration focused on improving the economic and human health of our state. It has effectively positioned Minnesota as a biosciences leader. By appropriating roughly \$7.5 million in annual funding through June 2015, the 2013 Legislature has demonstrated continued support.

In 2013, two Partnership supported projects came closer to advancing treatments for three types of cancer. In February, a team published their findings in the journal *PLoS ONE* that they had uncovered clues to possible drugs to treat two rare cancers: paraganglioma and pheochromocytoma. Then in May, a series of biomarker discoveries by a team of Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota colleagues, resulted in a licensed technology that will benefit prostate cancer patients globally.

The Partnership embarked on two separate grant funding programs in 2013. The first program, which focused on diabetes project proposals, awarded \$2 million in funding for four projects: insulin gene therapy for diabetes; a revolutionary sensor platform for realizing the artificial pancreas; SERCA activators for advanced diabetes therapy; and a novel method for detecting and targeting diabetes specific T cells. The internal and external review process that yielded these four projects served as continued validation and reinforcement that this Partnership is truly unique and this type of collaboration is a model.

The second program awarded a total of \$4.5 million to six unique projects designed to:

- Develop wearable technology for use in tracking the health of people at high risk for repeat heart failure
- Better understand a particular hormone that is thought to impact stress and other therapeutic goals
- Improve the sensitivity and accuracy of malaria rapid diagnostic tests
- Design models for epigenetic control systems to better identify the instances when changes in DNA sequence are not responsible for changes in gene activity
- Identify novel targets for anti-ovarian cancer therapies
- Develop novel microbiota-targeted therapies for irritable bowel system

If you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact us, or our legislative staff, Christine Kiel at 612.626.7372 or Erin Sexton at 507.284.0588. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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



Aaron Friedman, M.D.
Vice President for Health Sciences
Dean, Medical School
University of Minnesota

cc: Senator Bonoff, Chair, Higher Education; Senator Sparks, Chair, Jobs, Agriculture and Rural Development; Representative Pelowski, Chair, Higher Education Finance and Policy; Representative Mahoney, Chair, Jobs and Economic Development Finance and Policy