



Office of the President

September 6, 2013

Honorable Joel Kleefisch
State Representative
Room 307 North, State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Representative Kleefisch:

As President of the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for canceling the public hearing on Assembly Bill 224, originally scheduled for Thursday, September 12th. The Medical College of Wisconsin has four missions: Excellence in Education, Patient Care, Research and Community Engagement. If enacted, this bill would have crippled our research mission by banning the use of industry standard cell lines such as HEK-293, WI-38 and MRC-5. While this would have a devastating economic impact on our organization, more importantly it would shut down potentially lifesaving research that is only being conducted in Wisconsin.

These cell lines are now the building blocks for virtually all biomedical related research and have been in use since the 1960's and 1970's. Since that time, these lines have become standardized across the globe for research resulting in groundbreaking medical advancements. In fact, WI-38 and MRC-5 lines have been used to prepare hundreds of millions of doses of vaccines, preventing millions of cases of life-threatening rubella, hepatitis A, varicella, and rabies. Since AB 224 defines a fetal body part as "*a cell, tissue, organ, or other part of, or any material derived from any cell or tissue of, an unborn child.... who is aborted by an induced abortion,*" and further states that no one may use these cells for experimentation, the bill would ban this vital research in our state.

Specifically, the ban and criminalization of the use of these cells in Wisconsin would eliminate current research being conducted on childhood leukemia, Down's Syndrome, sudden cardiac death, maternal diseases of pregnancy, and spinal cord injury, to name a few.

Additionally, the scope of this bill is much wider than simply prohibiting the use of existing cell lines. Any steps to preclude this research would create an environment where it would be nearly impossible to retain existing researchers, let alone recruit top-tier scientists to Wisconsin, as the impediment to the scope of potential research and federal grant funding would prove to be insurmountable.

Again, we appreciate your decision to cancel this public hearing, ensuring that millions of dollars of life-saving research and thousands of Wisconsin-based jobs will continue to thrive in our state. We stand ready to meet with you at your convenience, should you wish to discuss this issue further. Please don't hesitate to contact me, Kathryn Kuhn, Vice President of Government and Community Relations or Nathan Berken, Director of Government Relations at any time.

Warm regards,

John R. Raymond, Sr., M.D.
President and CEO
Medical College of Wisconsin

cc: ✓ Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice

8701 Watertown Plank Road
Post Office Box 26509
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0509
(414) 955-8225
www.mcw.edu