13 February 2019

The Honourable Bill Morneau  
Minister of Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Canada

Dear Minister Morneau:

On behalf of the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR), I write to voice our support for the collaborative research networks previously supported through the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program. The ISSCR is the leading professional organization of stem cell scientists and represents more than 4,000 members in Canada and around the world. Our members are scientists, clinicians, ethicists and educators dedicated to the responsible advancement of stem cell research and its translation to the clinic. We encourage Canada to continue supporting collaborative research networks that leverage the expertise from academic researchers, industry, and non-profits to advance breakthrough science.

Canada’s investment in three stem cell research networks (Stem Cell Network, Regenerative Medicine and Cell Therapy Network, and Centre for the Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine) advanced the field of regenerative medicine and transformed Canada into a global leader. The networks funded basic research to advance understanding of human physiology, trained thousands of young scientists, funded hundreds of research groups, and developed Canada’s cell manufacturing capacity.

While we appreciate Canada’s commitment to funding fast-breaking research with the New Frontiers in Research Fund, we are concerned that Canada’s research enterprise will lose its competitive edge without the high-quality research collaborations financed previously through the NCE program. Therefore, we urge you to including a funding for collaborative research networks in the budget for 2019.

Thank you for considering our recommendations as you finalize Canada’s budget for 2019. If the ISSCR can clarify any of these views or be of assistance, please contact Eric Anthony, ISSCR’s Director of Policy at eanthony@isscr.org.

Sincerely,

Douglas A. Melton, PhD  
President, ISSCR  
Xander University Professor, Harvard University  
Co-Director, Harvard Stem Cell Institute

The International Society for Stem Cell Research is an independent, nonprofit organization established to promote and foster the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas relating to stem cells, to encourage the general field of research involving stem cells and to promote professional and public education in all areas of stem cell research and applications.