



April 28, 2021

Chairs Bernardy, Tomassoni and Members of the Higher Education Conference Committee:

Regenerative Medicine Minnesota (RMM) aspires to improve the health of Minnesotans by supporting and advancing regenerative medicine research, industry, and innovative health care delivery to patients. This state-wide initiative also opens new economic opportunities through commercialization of technologies and new jobs in the biomedical sector.

Regenerative Medicine Minnesota leverages the strengths of Minnesota institutions to position the state at the forefront of regenerative medicine. Since its inception in 2014 RMM has funded innovative projects that advance health and support the biotechnology industry in areas such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, eye disease, musculoskeletal disorders, obesity, spinal cord injury, and neurodegenerative disorders. These conditions are particularly common in afflicting Minnesotans.

Of the \$4.35 million RMM receives annually, \$3 million is invested in funding new, innovative research while the majority of the remaining funds fuels commercialization of these novel technologies by the Minnesota bio-business community. As one example, Dr. Robert Tranquillo and Senior Research Associate, Zeeshan Syedain developed biologically-engineered "off-the-shelf" vascular grafts (heart bypass), heart valves (congenital heart defect), and vein valves (chronic venous insufficiency/leg ulcers). These tissues, produced by skin cells (fibroblasts), have the capacity to grow and may thus transform the treatment of pediatric congenital heart defects.

We urge the committee to adopt the House position and maintain full funding to ensure uninterrupted advances in regenerative medicine throughout Minnesota. Continuous and adequate funding is essential to preserve Minnesota as a leader in regenerative medicine and maintain competitiveness, as other states further fund regenerative medicine.

Research in regenerative medicine is the future to discovering new ways to treat chronic, debilitating diseases for which curative therapies are currently lacking. With support from the state of Minnesota RMM will continue to be at the forefront of discovery and translation of innovative solutions, paying great dividends to the citizens of our state for many years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shernan Holtan".

Shernan Holtan, MD
University of Minnesota
Co-chairs Regenerative Medicine Minnesota Funding Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andre Terzic".

Andre Terzic, MD, PhD, FAHA
Mayo Clinic

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kristina Bloomquist".

Kristina Bloomquist, MEd, CPHQ, CHRC
National Marrow Donor Program

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Knapp".

David Knapp, PhD
Boston Scientific

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Barbara Nelsen".

Barbara Nelsen, PhD, MBA
Nelsen Biomedical