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CA Controller Appoints Neuroscientist to Review Panel for California's Stem Cell Agency

SACRAMENTO—State Controller Betty T. Yee today named a key appointee to the committee that reviews the financial practices of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

CIRM was created after voters approved Proposition 71 in 2004 to accelerate stem cell treatments for patients with unmet medical needs.

Dr. Michael Quick, a neurobiologist with a Ph.D. from Emory University, brings to the Citizens Financial Accountability Oversight Committee (CFAOC) decades of research, teaching, and leadership experience. CFAOC is a six-member panel, chaired by the State Controller, responsible for reviewing CIRM's annual financial audit and financial practices, and making recommendations to CIRM based on its findings.

"Dr. Quick's demonstrated leadership and in-depth understanding of cutting-edge research will be of great value to our committee, as we work to make California's stem cell agency a model for the world," said Yee, the state's chief fiscal officer.

Dr. Quick is a professor of biological sciences and currently serves as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Southern California (USC). He previously served USC as Director of the Neuroscience Graduate Program and Vice Dean for Research.

Prior to joining the staff at USC, Dr. Quick was an associate professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). He is the author of more than 60 scientific publications and the recipient of numerous teaching awards at USC and UAB.

CIRM issued its first round of funding in 2006, with a focus on training young scientists and building new research facilities in the state. By 2009, the agency began investing in potential future therapies made possible by the initial awards.

Some therapies that may come out of CIRM-funded research projects involve transplanting the cells themselves. Others will be drugs that were discovered through modeling diseases in a petri dish, and diagnostics that allow doctors to identify and treat diseases more effectively. CIRM funding promotes all areas of stem cell research that show promise to accelerate new treatments.

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