

# The American Society of Human Genetics

## Policy Statement

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August 27, 2001

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### *Statement on Stem Cell Research*

The [American Society of Human Genetics \(ASHG\)](#) is the primary professional organization for human geneticists, representing nearly 8,000 scientists, physicians, laboratory professionals, nurses, genetic counselors, and students actively engaged in genetic discovery, teaching, and application of knowledge of human genetics and the human genome.

The ASHG membership has interests in many of the issues raised in public debate on the use of stem cells in research. The recent decision presented to the public by President Bush and the intense policy discussions taking place in many forums in America have brought more attention to the issues.

As a major scientific organization whose members have broad expertise and interest in matters related to human genetics, and in the application of genetic knowledge to the well-being of people, the ASHG Board of Directors has prepared this statement on stem cell research.

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#### **The American Society of Human Genetics encourages the adoption of policies that:**

- Provide federal support for research to discover and apply the life-sustaining potential to be derived from existing embryonic stem cell lines;
- Enhance federal support for investigations of the potential of stem cells of adult and umbilical cord or similar sources;
- Encourage promising animal studies in embryonic stem cell research to provide a solid foundation for human investigation;
- Provide federal funding for research on cell lines derived from existing frozen embryos that would otherwise be discarded; and
- Support the appointment of an advisory body providing for federal oversight to foster public confidence in the conduct of stem cell research.

As stewards of the field of human genetics elected by the membership of the Society, the Board of Directors of ASHG affirms that basic research and the development of future applications of stem cell research require the ongoing commitment to scientific integrity and social responsibility that has served our organization well for the last 50 years. While the potential of stem cells holds great promise for therapeutic applications, scientists must proceed with commitment to rigorous critical evaluation, and a heightened sense of responsibility to the patients who entrust their life and health to us.