

Minnesota Partnership  
for Biotechnology and  
Medical Genomics



University of Minnesota  
Communications  
420 Delaware Street SE, MMC 735  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Tel. 612.624.5100

Mayo Clinic  
Stabile 13  
200 First Street SW  
Rochester, MN 55905  
Tel. 507.538.3939

January 6, 2012

Commissioner Mark R. Phillips  
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
1<sup>st</sup> National Bank Building  
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E-200  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351

Dear Commissioner Phillips:

The Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics (the Partnership) continues to effectively position Minnesota as a leader in biosciences, fostering research that improves the economic and human health of our state. From the Legislature's initial \$2 million investment (matched by Mayo Clinic and the University) in 2003, the Partnership has been a continuous success story and an investment that is making a difference. In fact, since 2003 the investment in the Partnership has helped investigators from the University and Mayo Clinic to attract over \$100 million in new NIH grant funding. We were pleased that the 2011 Minnesota Legislature continued to demonstrate support for the Partnership by approving \$7.5 million in annual funding through June 2013.

This year, the Partnership awarded five new research grants supporting work in producing antibodies that can be used to treat numerous neurological diseases; developing patient-specific islet cells for diabetes therapy; exploring "synthetic lethality" as a new avenue for cancer treatment; treating vascular disease through the generation of new endothelial cells; and rapidly determining the effectiveness of a cancer treatment. Each of these projects focuses on either diabetes, cancer, heart disease and neurological diseases – all among Minnesota's most concerning, and costly, medical ailments.

In addition to funding new research projects, the Partnership also invested \$620,000 in a commercialization project to develop drugs for treating human fungal infections (the result of a successful research grant funded from 2009-2011) and two new infrastructure projects. One of the infrastructure projects is focused on developing cloud computing solutions for biomedical research and the other will support state-of-the-art live cell multiphoton and super resolution optical microscopy.

2011 also marked the first full year of the Partnership's Decade of Discovery: A Minnesota Partnership to Prevent, Optimally Treat and Ultimately Cure Diabetes (the Decade), pursuing its goal by funding several collaborative projects. First, the Decade funded the Minnesota Health Atlas, a publicly available data resource that maps key diabetes information in Minnesota in order to identify areas of need to inform prevention and care strategies; monitor diabetes indicators and population health over time; and identify trends and evaluate interventions.

More recently, the Decade awarded grants totaling \$1.86 million for three projects to develop a specialized electronic chip that will vastly improve glucose monitoring and provide a critical component to developing an artificial pancreas; discover new molecular targets for a drug to fight obesity; and find targets that would make T cells (the killer cells of the body's immune system) more tolerant and keep them from destroying insulin producing beta cells.

If you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact us, or our legislative staff, Marty McDonough at 612.626.7372 or Erin Sexton at 507.284.0588. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Robert Rizza in black ink.

Robert Rizza, M.D.  
Executive Dean for Research  
Mayo Clinic

Handwritten signature of Aaron Friedman in black ink.

Aaron Friedman, M.D.  
Vice President for Health Sciences  
Dean, Medical School  
University of Minnesota

cc: Senator Fischbach, Chair, Higher Education; Senator Michel, Chair, Jobs and Economic Growth; Representative Nornes, Chair, Higher Education Policy and Finance; Representative Gunther, Chair, Jobs and Economic Development Finance