



# Get Up Stand Up to Cure Paralysis Foundation

4930 Sleepy Hollow Rd  
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- State Grant Committee for Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury Research approves research grants
- Two studies to improve function for Spinal Cord Injuries will be funded at HCMC & the U of MN (TC)
- Get Up Stand Up to Cure Paralysis donates \$15,000 to state grant program

**Minneapolis, Minnesota (January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016)** The Minnesota Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program announced grant recipients that funds innovative treatments for functional improvements for those suffering from spinal cord injuries. The grant recipients for spinal cord injury research are studying **Epidural Spinal Cord Stimulation for Spinal Cord Injury** to improve mobility and function and **Oligodendrocyte Progenitor Cells and Scar Ablation for the Treatment of Chronic Spinal Cord Injury**.

There are an estimated 10,500 people in Minnesota suffering from chronic spinal cord injuries (SCI) and around 276,000 people in the United States. SCI's affect mobility, the ability to live independently, regulate body temperature, blood pressure, and many other critical functions of the body. As the average age for injury is around 25 years old, estimated lifetime healthcare costs can amount to over \$4 million/ person with patients typically dependent on government support.

The Minnesota Spinal Cord & Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program is run under the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and was established by the Minnesota State Legislature in 2015 through engaged individual community advocates with SCI's. Sen. John Hoffman (D) and Rep. Rod Hamilton (R) championed and authored this legislation. **The program allocates \$500,000 in grants per year, plus public donations**, to be administered by a state appointed council of community members and professionals under the guidance of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. This grant program is modeled after 12 other state grant programs. Education, Healthcare, and Industrial institutions are eligible to receive these grants. Donations can be made to the state grant program to increase the amount of the grants.

***"Spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries can happen in an instant and change a person's life, and that of their family, forever," said Larry Pogemiller, commissioner of the Office of Higher Education (OHE). "These four grants continue the State's focus on advancing medical research and care."***

***"The Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program will help bring innovative and robust research to Minnesota which will help improve the quality of research and medical technology in Minnesota. This will ultimately bring effective treatments for functional improvements to Minnesotans in need faster."*** ***-Rob Wudlick, Chairman, GUSU2Cure Paralysis***

**Epidural Stimulation for Spinal Cord Injuries will be delivered to human patients with SCI this year at HCMC. This research has made it possible for human patients with complete paralysis to stand up, move limbs that were once paralyzed, and regain critical internal body functions.** The research will be studied in collaboration at Hennepin County Medical Center and the University of Minnesota and will study the effects of this treatment in people under the direction of David Darrow, MD MPH and Uzma Samadani, MD, PhD. The process involves implanting a spinal cord stimulator, such as one currently on the market made by Medtronic for the treatment of nerve pain, and adjusting the settings to a specific



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electrical impulse to excite the nervous system so individuals can move their previously paralyzed muscles. It is like a hearing aide for the spinal cord.

Research in Oligodendrocyte Progenitor Cells (OPC) and Scar Ablation for the Treatment of Chronic Spinal Cord Injury will be conducted in laboratories with rodents at the University of Minnesota, under the direction of Ann M. Parr, MD, PhD. OPC's are neural stem cells made from cells of the donor's body. These cells have many advantages compared to other stem cells, as they are non-embryonic and don't pose ethical concerns and they are cells taken from the same subject that receives the treatment which means the person will not need to take immune suppression drugs because the tissue used is not a donor transplant. One of the major challenges in spinal cord injury regeneration is the scar tissue left behind in the spinal cord after injury which prevents nerve regrowth. Research supported by the Spinal Cord Society has developed a compound to reduce the scar tissue. This research is unique, as it will be the first time these two perspective treatments will be combined in the laboratory.

Get Up Stand Up to Cure Paralysis (GUSU) is a Minnesota community lead nonprofit organization that advocates, educates, and supports spinal cord injury research for functional recovery. Members of GUSU championed the advocacy for several years in the Minnesota State Legislature to pass the Minnesota Spinal Cord & Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program. In 2015, GUSU raised \$15,000 to contribute to the grant program for spinal cord injury research. GUSU also leads monthly peer support groups and peer mentoring for those with spinal cord injuries and family members.

## Media Information/ Contact:

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### Past Relevant Articles:

<http://www.startribune.com/five-years-in-advocates-for-spinal-cord-injury-research-frustrated-by-house-committee-inaction/300711441/>

<http://www.unitedspinal.org/spinal-cord-and-traumatic-brain-injury-research-grant-program/>  
[www.gusu4cure.org](http://www.gusu4cure.org) (advocacy blog)

### Minnesota Office of Higher Education:

Official State Report: <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/SCI-TBILegislativeReport.pdf>

Contact: Dr. Nancy Walters at 651-259- 3907 or Sandy Connolly at 651-259-3202 or by email at sandy.connolly@state.mn.us.

### Legislative Support:

Senator John Hoffman (Senate Author): [sen.john.hoffman@senate.mn](mailto:sen.john.hoffman@senate.mn) , 651-296-4154

Representative Rod Hamilton (House Author): [rep.rod.hamilton@house.mn](mailto:rep.rod.hamilton@house.mn), 651-296-5373



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### Epidural Stimulation:

<http://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/spinal-stimulation-helps-four-patients-paraplegia-regain-voluntary-movement>

David Darrow, MD MPH, Principal Investigator, U of MN, (Contact Caroline Marin at 612-624-5680 or at [crmarin@umn.edu](mailto:crmarin@umn.edu) to request an interview with any expert from within the University's health sciences programs.)

### Oligodendrocyte Progenitor Cells (OPC) and Scar Ablation for the Treatment of Spinal Cord Injury:

OPC/ Lab Research: <http://legacy.kare11.com/story/news/local/2013/11/25/3712885/>

Ann Parr, Principal Investigator, U of MN, (Contact Caroline Marin at 612-624-5680 or at [crmarin@umn.edu](mailto:crmarin@umn.edu) to request an interview with any expert from within the University's health sciences programs.)

Scar Ablation: <http://www.scstwincities.org/research.html>

Mike Janssen, Executive Director, MN Spinal Cord Society, [eweturnrch@comcast.net](mailto:eweturnrch@comcast.net)  
(organization supporting preliminary scar ablation research)