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### **New Jersey Health Foundation Awards \$50,000 Grant For Research to Facilitate Stem Cell Growth**

New Brunswick, NJ –Dr. Steven Levison has received a \$50,000 Innovation Stage Funding Grant from New Jersey Health Foundation to advance research that could make stem cell growth easier and less expensive for researchers, scientists and others interested in using stem cells to advance medical studies.

Dr. Levison, a professor in the Department of Neurology and Neurosciences at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS), has worked collaboratively with colleagues at NJMS and at the New Jersey Institute of Technology to develop a multifunctional matrix that allows neural stem cells to be propagated as undifferentiated cells without daily feeding.

“Our cell culture matrices and supplements can be used in regenerative medicine, biotechnology and life science research,” explained Dr. Levison. “We can manufacture products that don’t contain animal components so that they are suitable for clinical applications.”

Dr. Levison explained that he and his research team have formulated and rigorously tested a novel growth matrix that promotes the proliferation and multipotency of neural stem cells. Commercially available matrices today, he said, do not incorporate defined growth factors. While some matrices do contain growth factors, they are not defined or suitable for therapeutic use.

“We are very interested in helping Dr. Levison advance his research because we believe this product could be commercialized successfully to be of tremendous benefit to the research community,” explained Dr. George F. Heinrich, vice chair and CEO of New Jersey Health Foundation. “His unique

product reduces the time-consuming and tedious task of feeding stem cells on a daily basis, which will save researchers time and money.”

Dr. Levison and his research team are presently modifying the scaffold to incorporate a variety of growth factors known to be beneficial for propagating other types of stem cells and progenitors.

Through the Innovation Stage Funding program, New Jersey health Foundation ([www.njhf.org](http://www.njhf.org)) has allocated \$500,000 to provide grants from \$10,000 to \$50,000 each to researchers at the Rutgers School of Biomedical and Health Sciences who have promising ideas to advance an intellectual property toward commercialization through a start-up.

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**About New Jersey Health Foundation**

New Jersey Health Foundation ([www.njhf.org](http://www.njhf.org)) is a not-for-profit corporation that supports biomedical research and health-related education programs in New Jersey through its matching program, its Grants Program and its affiliate, Foundation Venture Capital Group ([www.foundationventure.com](http://www.foundationventure.com)) which makes private equity investments in life science start-up companies in New Jersey headed toward commercialization.