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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DAVE WELDON, M.D.
15TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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HUMAN SERVICES
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

December 15, 2003

Kathy Murray
President and CEO
Northwestern Memorial Foundation
750 North Lake Shore Drive, Suite 542
Chicago, Ill 60611


Dear Ms. Murray,

As a physician and Member of the United States Congress I have followed closely the work of Dr. Burt and his research team. As a member of the Committee with jurisdiction over the National Institutes of Health (NIH), I have been a strong advocate of translational research that can directly benefit patients. Too often, productive research is too slow to bring a positive impact to the lives of suffering patients. Dr. Burt is one of a few unique and talented physicians who can accomplish this task. He has extended a vision of immune and tissue regeneration from adult stem cells into an NIH funded program with a team of nurses and physicians working on projects that have attracted and benefited patients from around the country including my home state of Florida.

Dr. Burt has transcended traditional and often arbitrary separations in subspecialties by finding a common thread in using adult stem cells to regenerate a new immune system for patients with severe autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, polymyositis, scleroderma, and vasculitis to mention just a few diseases. You have my congratulations in being the first and the premier institution worldwide for this therapy. Dr. Burt's program of stem cell regenerative medicine, that has been so successful in autoimmune diseases, is now being extended to other diseases such as cardiac and peripheral vascular disease.

As a physician, I know that such programs require a supportive institution with investment of resources to expand and grow to full potential. You have my complete support in efforts to extend this research program that has already given your institution a worldwide reputation for leadership in patient directed research excellence. Your support for this research effort is an investment in our future.

Sincerely,


Dave Weldon, M.D.
Member of Congress