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**International Society for Cellular Therapy (ISCT) leads roundtable with major US payors, healthcare providers and industry to initiate a collaboration to address Cell Therapy product reimbursement.**

**The interest of many insured US citizens was represented by participation of payor organizations including Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, LifeTrac and OptumHealth.**

Vancouver, Canada (September, 29 2011) In keeping with its mission to drive the commercialization of cell therapy products and advance global patient access, ISCT hosted its second event this year in its Commercial Development Series, this time focusing on the timely issue of reimbursement for cell therapy and regenerative medicine products in the US market.

Despite the accelerating pace of clinical trials in the field, the path for reimbursement for these innovative applications is progressing slowly in many key markets. Reimbursement and physician acceptance are the ultimate determination for moving new therapies into standard of care. Until strategies and reimbursement paths are more defined, the availability of the world's most promising therapies could be limited in the United States.

ISCT has taken the first steps in addressing this roadblock to commercialization with its inaugural Reimbursement Roundtable aiming to educate stakeholders on the scope and complexity of the issues for cell therapy and regenerative medicine product reimbursement in the USA. By facilitating a dialogue on the issues and implications in a collaborative approach ISCT aims to catalyze a multidisciplinary effort to create a sustainable model for adequate cell therapy reimbursement for US patients.

Attendance at this first Reimbursement Roundtable held in Minneapolis, MN, USA, September 14 2011, included leadership from the major healthcare payor organizations, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, LifeTrac, and OptumHealth as well as US Bioservices. Athersys Inc, Aastrom Biosciences, Inc., Baxter International, Inc, Aesculap Implant Systems, LLC, and Pluristem Therapeutics Inc, all biotech and healthcare companies on the verge of bringing cell therapy products to patients with their late stage clinical trials also participated. The perspectives of healthcare providers, research funders and advocacy organizations were represented with participation from leading clinicians, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), America's Blood Centers (ABC), and ISCT's event partner the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP).

"The promise of regenerative medicine is huge, but there remains significant obstacles to overcome, of which reimbursement is critical. Even after a new therapy is approved by a regulatory agency, if the reimbursement system is not in place, patients may lack or have limited access to these new treatments.", said Richard Maziarz, MD, Medical Director, Adult Stem Cell Transplantation Program & Center for Hematologic Malignancies, Oregon Health & Science University Knight Cancer Institute.

"We commend ISCT for its initiative in bringing together a dynamic and influential group of industry leaders to address Cell Therapy product reimbursement," said Michael Boo, chief strategy officer, NMDP. "Our direct experience and countless clinical studies demonstrate that unrelated donor hematopoietic cell transplants are a life-saving therapy. Increasing access to this therapy will save countless lives and do more to reduce health care costs than denying care."

Ed Horwitz, M.D. PhD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Oncology, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and President of ISCT agreed "this latest initiative reinforces ISCT's strategic commitment to build the necessary alignment with academia, industry and other stakeholders to expedite the development and maturation of the field and ultimately bring cell therapy treatments to patients faster."

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Visit [www.celltherapyfocusgroups.com](http://www.celltherapyfocusgroups.com) for further information on the Reimbursement Roundtable agenda and participants. A summary report on the event will be published in Cytotherapy, the official journal of ISCT in early 2012.

The ISCT Reimbursement Roundtable launch follows the first successful event in its Commercial Development Series on Clinical Trial Design for Peripheral Vascular Disease and the launch of the ISCT Industry Community in August 2010. See: [www.celltherapysociety.org/index.php/about-us/media](http://www.celltherapysociety.org/index.php/about-us/media)

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ISCT is a global association driving the translation of scientific research to deliver innovative cellular therapies and advancing global patient access. Established in 1992, its membership and leadership comprises world-class scientists, clinicians, technologists, biotech/pharma and regulatory professionals from around the world focused on pre-clinical and translational aspects of developing cell therapy products.

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