



New Jersey Catholic Stem Cell Research Education Campaign

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Stem cell research and hope for cures — getting the story straight

Find out why paraplegic James Kelly opposes funding for embryonic stem cell research

Shortly after James Kelly's spine shattered in a 1997 car accident, he became another in a long line of patient advocates to endorse embryonic stem cell research. Like other more famous patient advocates — Christopher Reeve and Michael J. Fox come to mind — Kelly believed research using stem cells from live human embryos or cloned human embryos offered him the best hope of a normal life again.

Then a funny thing happened. As Kelly devoured all the research information he could lay his eyes on, a persistent, stubborn fact kept emerging: embryonic stem cells haven't worked, don't work and probably never will work as advertised.

More than that, Kelly began to see that the political posturing of sympathetic but misinformed advocates like Reeve and Fox swayed public and political sentiment. Kelly watched helplessly as public opinion started diverting precious dollars away from truly promising medical research using adult stem cells, a kind of stem cell found naturally throughout the body that has produced exciting results for a variety of illnesses and conditions.

Kelly's journey from embryonic stem cell advocate to ferocious opponent is featured in the documentary, **The Science of Stem Cells: Findings Cures and Protecting Lives**. The production is part of an comprehensive education campaign presented in

New Jersey where voters will be asked to approve spending \$450 million on stem cell research and human cloning, with most of the money devoted to embryonic stem cell research. If that happens, Kelly believes his own hopes for a cure or treatment will only suffer.

Nearly 10 years after his accident, Kelly spends much of his time at home in Colorado writing articles and making phone calls, trying to convince anyone who will listen that limited research dollars should be spent on those areas with the *best* chance of success. For Kelly, the choice is clear. "Adult stem cell research is a real cause for hope."

Less than two years before Christopher Reeve died, Kelly debated him at a forum sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences. "In this and other public forums,



James Kelly

Mr. Reeve made one demonstrably false statement after another about stem cell research,” recalls Kelly. “Statements that were taken as true by many.”

“When I mentioned clinical trials using adult stem cells to treat spinal-cord injury in Europe, Mr. Reeve denied that they existed, saying that if they did ‘I would know of it.’ Our moderator, the head of a biotechnology company, said I could tell Mr. Reeve more about these trials after the formal debate — but when I later tried to do so, the moderator put his hand over my mouth while Mr. Reeve's attendants wheeled him away.”

But it's hard to muzzle Kelly these days. He serves as director of The Cures 1st Foundation, promoting practical uses of research resources and is frequently called

upon to speak about his “conversion” from embryonic stem cell supporter to opponent.

James Kelly's crusade against funding embryonic stem cell research is simply a matter of basic science and biology — it just doesn't work, probably never will and is a colossal waste of time and money.

To view *The Science of Stem Cells: Finding Cures and Protecting Lives* visit www.RespectLifeToday.org

Written by: Chuck Weber, Executive Director of SaintMax Worldwide, producer of the video