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Dear Educator,

The University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics has announced that it will be distributing a course package titled, "Engage: Stem Cells" to all Canadian high Schools. We have examined the content of this package and have serious concerns that much of its content is erroneous and biased.

We strongly agree that education in this area is crucial for students to understand this very important issue. We have, however, seen that the package contains many scientific and other distortions and omissions. Its representation of the arguments in the ethical debate is heavily biased and is achieved through omission of any opposing view. We fear that this is a result of the fact that its authors have a vested interest in embryonic stem cell research, and that this initiative is a means of enlisting our students to lobby for their position in the guise of an academic exercise.

If you intend to use the curriculum package in your course, we hope that you keep in mind the deficiencies of its content and at least supplement it with a fair and accurate presentation of the opposing viewpoint.

In an effort to clarify the issue we are enclosing documents which we hope you will examine carefully, which are intended to correct some of the inaccuracies and omissions in the U of T package. Many of the problems in the package are the standard ones which we regularly see in media reporting and in Parliament on this issue, and as such a comparison of the two documents may be relevant to your course work in and of itself.

If you have any questions about this supplement or on issues of bioethics in general, please do not hesitate to call our research department at LEEA at 416-204-1202 (Toll free 1-800-730-5358)

Yours truly,

Cyril P. Bagin
Education Director, Life Ethics Educational Association