What Is Claimed:

~~1. A method of treating a sclerotic condition comprising administration of an expression vector, or cells comprising an expression vector, wherein said vector or cells comprise a polynucleotide encoding a fusion protein comprising a non-matrix metalloproteinase (non-MMP) signal peptide and a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) polypeptide, or an enzymatically active collagen-degrading fragment thereof.~~

~~2. The method of claim 1, wherein the cells are first isolated from a patient suffering from scleroderma.~~

~~3. The method of claim 2, wherein the isolated cells are cultured *ex vivo*.~~

~~4. The method of claim 3, wherein the cells are fibroblasts.~~

~~5. The method of claim 1, wherein the polynucleotide encoding MMP or a collagen-degrading fragment thereof is further operably linked to a gene switch expression system.~~

~~6. The method of claim 5, wherein the gene expression switch system is activated to express MMP in the presence of an activator ligand and deactivated to reduce expression of MMP in the absence of the activator ligand.~~

~~7. The method of claim 1, wherein MMP is matrix metalloproteinase-1 (MMP-1).~~

~~8. The method of claim 7, wherein MMP-1 is human MMP-1.~~

~~9. The method of claim 1, wherein the expression vector is a viral vector.~~

~~10. The method of claim 8, wherein the viral vector is derived from a virus selected from lentivirus, adenovirus, and adeno-associated virus.~~

~~11. The method of claim 9, wherein the viral vector is a lentiviral vector.~~

~~12. The method of claim 6, wherein the activator ligand is veledimex.~~

~~13. The method of claim 1, wherein administration is by intradermal injection.~~

~~14. The method of claim 1, wherein veledimex is administered to the patient following injection of the transfected cells.~~

~~15. The method of claim 14, wherein the veledimex is delivered for at least five days after administration of cells.~~

~~16. The method of claim 1, wherein the sclerotic condition is scleroderma.~~

~~17. The method of claim 16, wherein the scleroderma is selected from linear scleroderma, circumscribed morphea, generalized morphea, pansclerotic morphea, and mixed morphea.~~

~~18. A lentiviral vector comprising a polynucleotide encoding a fusion protein comprising a non-matrix metalloproteinase (non-MMP) signal peptide and a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) polypeptide, or an enzymatically active collagen-degrading fragment thereof operably linked to a gene switch system.~~

~~19. The lentiviral vector of claim 18, wherein the gene switch system comprises an inducible promoter operably linked to a ligand-inducible transcription factor.~~

~~20. The lentiviral vector of claim 19, wherein the gene switch system is activated in the presence of an activator ligand and deactivated in the absence of the activator ligand.~~

~~21. The lentiviral vector of claim 18, comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.~~

~~22. A lentiviral vector comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.~~

~~23. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a fibroblast obtained from a patient suffering from scleroderma transduced or transfected with a vector comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.~~

~~24. A cell transduced *in vitro* or *ex vivo* with the vector of claim 22.~~

~~25. An isolated genetically modified cell or population of genetically modified cells comprising a polynucleotide encoding a fusion protein comprising a non-matrix metalloproteinase (non-MMP) signal peptide and a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) polypeptide, or an enzymatically active collagen-degrading fragment thereof operably linked to a gene switch system.~~

~~26. The genetically modified cell or population of genetically modified cells of claim 25, wherein the polynucleotide is present in the cell or population of cells, or integrated into the cell genome or population of cell genomes, at an average copy number of greater than 1 and less than 6 copies per cell.~~

1. An invention not claimed in any divisional application.