eSequence

ACGT National grants for cell and gene therapy cancer research
ALLIANCE FOR CANCER GENE THERAPY

April 16, 2013

Breakthroughs in the News

Rally for Medical Research



ACGT served as a partner organization at the Rally for Medical Research April 8th in Washington, DC in an effort to restore the $1.6 billion [5.1% of the NIH budget] that was cut as a result of the Sequester. Young investigators throughout the country will be hit the hardest by the dramatic spending cut, further compromising the discovery research that underscores profound breakthroughs in medical science. ACGT is the only charity in the nation committed solely to funding innovative cancer gene therapy research but can only make up for a fraction of the cuts. Make sure to contact your congressional representative now to voice your objection to cuts in funding for cancer research.

Dr. Carl June Wins Philadelphia Award



"Funding was not available from the NIH for gene therapy in 2004. ACGT was the first to be there, to say that cell and gene therapies can be a new platform for therapy, and giving literally lifesaving grants to scientists who cannot get them from the federal system."
- Dr. Carl June, ACGT Scientific Advisory Council Member, University of Pennsylvania

ACGT Scientific Advisory Council member, and Research Fellow, Carl June, MD, has been named the 2012 Philadelphia Award recipient for his extraordinary advancements in gene therapy. Dr. June's groundbreaking therapy for chronic and advanced leukemia is the result of two decades of research, and received critical funding in 2008 by the ACGT Joan Miller & Linda Bernstein Gene Therapy Ovarian Cancer Award. The Philadelphia prize, founded in 1921 by editor/philanthropist Edward Bok, is awarded annually to a resident who has made a significant impact upon the city and honors service as the meaning of good citizenship.

Applications in Review for 20th Grant Cycle

We have received 49 letters of intent for the next round of Investigator Grants for cell and gene therapy research leading to clinical translation. Not surprisingly, many of the abstracts are in the field of T-cell therapy, thanks to the great progress made by scientists like Dr. June at the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Michel Sadelain at Memorial Sloan-Kettering. After thorough review by the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and Research Fellows, the Board will award one or more $500,000 grant(s) in June. Read more about the ACGT Grants Program.

2012 Research Fellow Prepares for Clinical Trial



Dr. Herbert J. Zeh, III, the ACGT 2012 Investigator for immunotherapy research, is preparing for clinical trial late this year for eligible patients with pancreatic and colorectal cancer. Dr. Zeh said that he was most grateful for this prestigious grant, and enthusiastic that the novel combination of immunotherapy and targeted vaccine therapy is safe and "lights the fire" to attract immune cells to the tumor. He is also enthusiastic that these therapies will prove a step forward in learning how cancer evades the immune system. Read more...

View a video of Dr. Zeh speaking about his research at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center...

Co-Founder Celebrates Progress

ACGT President and Co-Founder, Barbara Netter, recently attended a gathering of top donors and volunteers where the latest advances in cancer research were presented by the Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania. The event celebrated seven year-old Emily Whitehead's one year anniversary of being cancer free. Whitehead received groundbreaking gene therapy treatment for lymphoblastic leukemia, which was made possible by research conducted at Penn Medicine by Dr. Carl June and colleagues.



Pictured [l to r] Bruce Levine, M.D., Director, Clinical Cell and Vaccine Production Facility; Barbara Netter; Emily Whitehead and her mother, Kari Whitehead; and Madlyn Abramson, Honorary Chair, Abramson Cancer Center Director's Leadership Council. Top Row, from left to right: Ralph Muller, Chief Executive Officer, University of Pennsylvania Health System; Daniel Keating, III, Chair, Abramson Cancer Center Director's Leadership Council; J. Larry Jameson, M.D., Ph.D., Executive Vice President, University

of Pennsylvania for the Health System and Dean, Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania; Tom Whitehead, father of Emily Whitehead; Stephan A. Grupp, M.D., Ph.D., Director of Translational Research, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Chi V. Dang, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Abramson Cancer Center

At the Upcoming Annual ASGCT Meeting



At the annual meeting of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy, an ACGT-sponsored symposium on cell and gene cancer therapies will be held the evening of May 16th in Salt Lake City, Utah, featuring ACGT Scientific Advisory Council members Dr. Carl June, University of Pennsylvania, Joseph Glorioso, PhD, University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Stephen Russell, PhD, Mayo Clinic and Dr. Lieping Chen, PhD, Yale Cancer Center. The panel discussion on targeted therapies will be chaired by ACGT Scientific Advisory Council Members Savio L. C. Woo, PhD, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, and Xandra Breakefield, PhD, Harvard Medical School, who served this year as President of ASGCT, a national organization of physicians, scientists and organizations engaged in cell and gene therapies and research. Read more about the upcoming meeting.

Save the Date

Swim Across America, June 22, 2013



The 7th annual Swim Across America for ACGT is set for June 22nd and promises to be another fabulous event. Last year, hundreds of swimmers and boaters were cheered on by a small army of volunteers and supporters and raised over $400,000 to support cell and gene therapy research. Swims are also held in backyard pools and swim clubs - a great way to support a cancer survivor or honor a loved one and have a great day with friends and family. Learn more about Swim Across America for ACGT.

Cancer-Fighting Consortium Promotes Team Model

"In the old days, everyone knew it took 30 years to test a compound," says Dr. Daniel Haber, director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center. Scientists got that to an eight-to-10-year process. Teams of researchers have whittled it down to a two-year timeline from the discovery of a specific mutation to a drug to treat it. That's fast by most measures - but not fast enough if you're a patient.

- an excerpt from "The Conspiracy to End Cancer" article by Bill Saporito, Time Magazine, April 1, 2013

A *Time* magazine cover story in the April 1st issue highlighted a new model to more closely align science and medicine as a new paradigm to win the war on cancer. 1.6 million Americans will be diagnosed and more than half a million will die of cancer this year, and despite progress in diagnosis and some treatments, breakthrough treatments are elusive. Recognizing the complexity of the process, Nobel Prize-winning molecular biologist Phillip Sharp at MIT has been working with Stand Up to Cancer [SU2C] to recruit research scientists, physicians, pharmaceutical companies and funders based on business-building models that aggressively target gaps in the marketplace. SU2C offers multi-million dollar grants to qualified teams, and progress is monitored by the American Association for Cancer Research. Read the TIME magazine article.

YOU CAN HELP!
Give generously to Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy, the only public charity in the nation dedicated solely to cell and gene therapy research for cancer. Your support makes it possible to discover new treatment options and move them to medical practice sooner than later. Thank you.

Donate now!

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