

Lustgarten Foundation Awarded \$22 Million For Pancreatic Cancer Research Foundation Attracts New Talent to Study Pancreatic Cancer

WOODBURY, N.Y., Jan. 15, 2018 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Lustgarten Foundation announced today that it funded \$22 million in 2017 as part of its commitment to invest an unprecedented \$40 million by the end of 2018. In addition to funding the most accomplished scientists in pancreatic cancer research, the Foundation is attracting new researchers to the field. New to the field of pancreatic cancer research as a result of this funding are **David Sabatini, M.D., Ph.D.**, Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research and **David Pellman, M.D.**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

"Part of our overall research strategy is to ensure that we have the very best minds working on solving this problem. Bringing in new thinking from geneticists, biochemists and cell biologists will accelerate our progress. We need to approach this disease from every angle," said Andrew Whiteley, the Foundation's Director of Scientific and Medical Programs.

Explaining his personal motivation to focus on pancreatic cancer, Sabatini said, "Surprising findings in my studies on the biology of cancer growth regulators led me to tackle this disease. This work could lead to new treatments."

A UNIQUE APPROACH

Understanding the basic biology of pancreatic cancer enables the Foundation to get to the very core of the disease. Every aspect, from a cancer cell's genes to the tumor's environment, is under investigation. Lustgarten funded researchers are exploring the molecules that make up a cancer cell, how and why it transitions from normal to abnormal and why tumors react differently to various treatments. From basic science to the clinic, Lustgarten Foundation funded researchers are investigating ways to detect the disease earlier, personalize treatments and develop better therapies.

Lustgarten Foundation Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Core to the Foundation's research strategy is funding a dedicated pancreatic cancer research laboratory at the world-class research facility, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL). The basic research of **Dr. David Tuveson**, the Foundation's Director of Research and the Roy J. Zuckerman Professor of Cancer Research at CSHL, and his team, are now being applied in the clinic. Most notable are clinical studies utilizing the organoid (three-dimensional cellular models of pancreatic cancer) to tailor treatment options for individual patients.

Stand Up To Cancer

The need to do more is at the root of the collaboration between Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) and the Lustgarten Foundation. Working together since 2012, this relationship continues to flourish with more than \$60 million of combined funding and 170 investigators at 28 research centers in the United States and the United Kingdom. The two newest "Cancer Interception" projects are focused on earlier detection and surgical intervention, to actively intervene in the formation of pancreas cancer, rather than waiting to treat fully developed malignancies.

Translational Clinical Program

The Foundation's new Translational Clinical Program is funding programs at Columbia University Medical Center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine with the goal of moving biology into the clinic. **Kenneth Olive, Ph.D, Andrea**

Califano, Dr. and Gary Schwartz, M.D., from Columbia University, are evaluating an entirely new approach to personalized medicine using sophisticated systems biology methodologies to match drugs to patients based on the RNA content of their tumor. **Brian Wolpin, M.D., MPH** and his team at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute are expanding treatment options for patients through the use of organoids and genomic markers. Together, their work will reveal whether these strategies can help inform treatment decisions in the clinic and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

Lustgarten Foundation Distinguished Scholar **Dr. Bert Vogelstein** at Johns Hopkins is leading several earlier detection projects -- one with the goal of developing a routine blood screening test like we have for prostate cancer and another, an imaging-based technology for automating CT scan analysis. The goal for the imaging project is to use artificial intelligence methods to automate the identification of hard-to-detect smaller tumor growths at an earlier stage. Early data from the blood screening test has been extremely encouraging and Dr. Vogelstein and his team are continuing to refine the imaging technology.

Research Investigator Program

The Lustgarten Foundation Research Investigators are charged with advancing the study of pancreatic cancer that will lead to earlier detection methods, personalized medicine and new and effective therapies. Various approaches – immunotherapy, cancer genetics, epigenetics and cancer metabolism – will be used to achieve very specific outcomes. The four new projects are being conducted by **Andrew Feinberg, M.D.**, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; **Elizabeth Jaffee, M.D.**, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins; **David Pellman, M.D.**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and **David Sabatini, M.D., Ph.D.**, Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, Boston. The two extended are being conducted by **Tony Hunter, Ph.D.**, Salk Institute for Biological Studies and **Hidde Ploegh, Ph.D.**, Children's Hospital Boston.

The Lustgarten Foundation continues to make large scale commitments to leading pancreatic cancer researchers, funding awards that seek to continually stretch the boundaries of science.

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About the Lustgarten Foundation

The Lustgarten Foundation is America's largest private foundation dedicated to funding pancreatic cancer research. Based in Woodbury, N.Y., the Foundation supports research to find a cure for pancreatic cancer, facilitates dialogue within the medical and scientific community, and educates the public about the disease through awareness campaigns and fundraising events. Since its inception, the Lustgarten Foundation has directed \$154 million to research and assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to private funding, 100 percent of every dollar donated to the Foundation goes directly to pancreatic cancer research. For more information, please visit www.lustgarten.org.

SOURCE The Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research

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