

# Lustgarten Foundation Advances Pancreatic Cancer Research Through Partnerships with the Opening of Two New Laboratories

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**The Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research →**

08:01 ET

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WOODBURY, N.Y., Sept. 21, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- The Lustgarten Foundation is pleased to announce two new pancreatic cancer research laboratories through respective partnerships with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The opening of these Lustgarten Foundation Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratories will usher in a new era of research progress and represents an initial \$10 million investment. These laboratories position the Foundation to be the only non-profit in the country to have three laboratories devoted to pancreatic cancer research.

"The addition of these two laboratories, along with our dedicated laboratory at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, will help us bring together the best science and research minds to foster and advance the goals of finding a cure for pancreatic cancer," said David Tuveson, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Scientist and Director of the Lustgarten Foundation Dedicated Research Laboratory, and Director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Cancer Center at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

United in the shared goal of improving patient outcomes, the laboratories will increase collaboration between world-renowned pancreatic cancer researchers and explore new, promising avenues for understanding and treating this disease from the bench to the bedside. At the time the Lustgarten Foundation was established in 1998, pancreatic cancer was indeed

an "orphan" disease, with fewer than 15 researchers studying pancreatic cancer nationally. Twenty years later, and with the additions of these dedicated laboratories, thousands of researchers are now focused on pancreatic cancer.

At Dana-Farber, under the leadership of Brian Wolpin, M.D., MPH, Director of the Gastrointestinal Cancer Center, Director of the Hale Family Center for Pancreatic Cancer Research, and the Robert T. & Judith B. Hale Chair in Pancreatic Cancer, the Lustgarten Laboratory at Dana-Farber will be a critical hub for advancing pancreatic cancer translational research, initiating scientifically-driven clinical trials, and identifying new approaches to early pancreatic cancer detection. This work will also capitalize on the large, multidisciplinary network of investigators working on pancreatic cancer at Dana-Farber, under the umbrella of the Hale Center.

The research conducted in the Lustgarten Laboratory at Dana-Farber will focus on three main objectives:

- Study the genetic composition and functionally characterize the driver pathways of pancreatic tumors, which will lead to personalized treatment options for patients;
- Expand clinical trials for patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer, in which treatments are selected using organoids, or miniature 3-D tissue samples taken from a patient's tumor. Organoids allow multiple drugs to be tested in real time to identify the best course of treatment for the patient; and
- Identify new blood-based and imaging markers of asymptomatic pancreatic cancer and new models for pancreatic cancer risk prediction to facilitate earlier cancer detection.

The Lustgarten Laboratory at MIT will leverage its unparalleled expertise in cancer biology and engineering to advance pancreatic cancer research. Led by Tyler Jacks, Ph.D., Director of MIT's Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, Daniel K. Ludwig Scholar and David H. Koch Professor of Biology, the laboratory will examine the immune responses to the disease using molecular profiling to characterize patients' pancreatic tumors.

The main objectives of the Lustgarten Laboratory at MIT will be to:

- Evaluate the role the immune system plays in the development of pancreatic tumors and progression of the disease to lead to better therapeutic options;
- Explore pancreatic cancer progression using single cell profiling technologies, which will provide new insights into the mechanisms of disease development as well as identify new targets for intervention;
- Reduce the time required to produce an organoid; and,
- Use organoids and mouse models with specific mutations to examine genes that may be responsible for tumor development and explore DNA manipulation through screenings to examine disease progression.

### **About the Lustgarten Foundation**

The Lustgarten Foundation is America's largest private funder of 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 \$165 million to research and assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to separate funding to support administrative expenses, 100 percent of your donation goes directly to pancreatic cancer research. For more information, please visit [www.lustgarten.org](http://www.lustgarten.org).

### **About Dana-Farber**

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is one of the world's leading centers of cancer research and treatment. It is the only center ranked in the top 4 of U.S. News and World Report's Best Hospitals for both adult and pediatric cancer care. Dana-Farber's mission is to reduce the burden of cancer through scientific inquiry, clinical care, education, community engagement, and advocacy. We provide the latest in cancer care for adults through Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center and for children through Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center. Dana-Farber is dedicated to a unique and equal balance between cancer research and care, translating the results of discovery into new treatments for patients locally and around the world. For more information, visit [www.dana-farber.org/PancreasBiliaryCenter](http://www.dana-farber.org/PancreasBiliaryCenter) and [www.halecenter.dfci.harvard.edu](http://www.halecenter.dfci.harvard.edu).

### **About The Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research**

The Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, a National Cancer Institute-designated Basic Cancer Research Center, is the hub of cancer research on the MIT campus. Bringing

together biologists, chemists, engineers, computer scientists, clinicians, and others in a state-of-the-art facility, the Koch Institute offers fresh perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches to advancing the fight against cancer. Working within the vibrant MIT research community and with external collaborators, including NCI-designated clinical cancer centers and biotech/pharma partners, the Koch Institute is dedicated to developing novel insights into cancer, as well as new tools and technologies to better detect, treat, and prevent the disease. For more information about MIT's Koch Institute, please visit <https://ki.mit.edu/>

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