



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research and The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group Partner to Award \$6.75M in New Grants to Drive the Next Wave of Novel Cancer Therapies

***New “Blood Cancer Discoveries Grant Program”
supported by a novel three-way collaboration***

(Rye Brook, NY, July 1, 2020) - Seeking to ignite the next major breakthroughs to treat blood cancers, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS), The Mark Foundation, and The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group today announced more than \$6.75 million awarded to nine of the most exceptional scientists in the field.

The innovative **Blood Cancer Discoveries Grant Program** is designed to encourage researchers with deep experience in the blood cancers to conduct critical basic research in hopes of unleashing the next wave of novel approaches to treating leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma and myelodysplastic syndromes; together, these cancers are the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S.

“Over our 70-year history, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society has been at the forefront of revolutionary cancer treatments from the early days of chemotherapy and stem cell transplantation to the leading edge discoveries of immunotherapy and precision medicine; our investment in research is nearly \$1.3 billion over that time,” said Lee Greenberger, LLS’s chief scientific officer. “With this new initiative, LLS maintains its role as a driver of innovation, supporting early stage research to propel discoveries that might lead to the next generation of treatments and cures, and help accelerate promising therapies to patients.”

The grants are awarded to researchers seeking to understand the biological underpinnings of various blood cancers, what causes them to develop and grow, or become resistant to treatments. Each project will be supported by an award of \$750,000 over a three-year period.

“In science, collaboration can accelerate the pace of achievement,” said Michele Cleary, Ph.D., CEO of The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research. “Similarly, this three-way partnership among foundations will accelerate our understanding of cancer biology by empowering some of the brightest scientists to simultaneously probe unique but challenging areas of unmet need. We look forward to the discoveries that will result from these efforts.”

Added Kathryn Richmond, Ph.D., MBA, director of the Frontiers Group, a division of the Allen Institute, “Our organization is committed to pushing the boundaries of bioscience and accelerating discoveries to make a difference for humankind, and we believe these grants will be a catalyst that will spark innovative new directions in blood cancer research.”

“We are grateful that the Frontiers Group and Mark Foundation have aligned with us to fund some of the greatest minds in cancer discovery,” said LLS’s Greenberger. “Collaborating with foundations who share a common goal of fueling leading-edge research to advance cures and better, safer treatments for cancer patients is critical to advancing our mission.”

The **Blood Cancer Discoveries Grant Program** recipients are:

Robert Bradley, Ph.D.

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Dr. Bradley is investigating the mutations in the SF3B1 protein and their connection with myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) and leukemias, and exploring this protein as a therapeutic target.

Catriona Jamieson, M.D., Ph.D.

University of California San Diego

Dr. Jamieson is examining the role of two enzymes (APOBEC3 and ADAR1) known to mutate DNA and RNA and their role in AML and disease relapse, particularly in elderly patients.

Ronald (Ron) Levy, M.D.

Stanford University School of Medicine

Dr. Levy is investigating a pre-clinical “off-the-shelf” CAR (chimeric antigen receptor) T-cell immunotherapy approach where the CAR cells are generated directly in the patient’s body.

Ravindra (Ravi) Majeti, M.D., Ph.D.

Stanford University School of Medicine

Dr. Majeti is generating cell-based models to test the progression of preleukemic cells into acute myeloid leukemia (AML). His lab will use these models to test potential therapies and the role of the microenvironment in disease progression.

Markus Müschen M.D., Ph.D.

City of Hope

Dr. Müschen is exploring a protein called LGR5 found in multiple B-cell malignancies such as B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia, mantle cell lymphoma and diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, as a potential diagnostic marker and therapeutic target. He is planning to test small molecule inhibitors and different immunotherapies in preclinical models.

Susan Schwab, Ph.D.

New York University

Dr. Schwab is examining the mechanism of T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL) cells that allow them to enter and accumulate in the central nervous system when the disease spreads to the brain.

Margaret Shipp, M.D.

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/ Harvard Medical School

Dr. Shipp and her colleague, Scott J. Rodig, MD, Ph.D., are mapping the immune microenvironment in classical Hodgkin lymphoma.

Robert Signer, Ph.D.

University of California San Diego

Dr. Signer is investigating how the biological process of building defective proteins (inaccurate protein synthesis) plays a role in the development of acute myeloid leukemia (AML) in the hopes of developing targeted therapies to treat this condition.

Daniel T. Starczynowski, Ph.D

Cincinnati Children's Research Foundation

Dr. Starczynowski is investigating the role and potential therapeutic benefit of targeting of a protein called UBE2N in acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

Click [here](#) for more details on each awardee.

About The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society® (LLS) is a global leader in the fight against cancer. The LLS mission: cure leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world, provides free information and support services, and is the

voice for all blood cancer patients seeking access to quality, affordable, coordinated care.

Founded in 1949 and headquartered in Rye Brook, NY, LLS has chapters throughout the United States and Canada. To learn more, visit www.LLS.org. Patients should contact the Information Resource Center at (800) 955-4572, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., ET.

The LLS Children's Initiative: Cures and Care for Children with Cancer

The **LLS Children's Initiative** is a \$100 million multi-year effort to take on children's cancer through every facet of LLS's mission: research, patient education and support and policy and advocacy. The LLS Children's Initiative includes: more pediatric research grants, a global precision medicine clinical trial, expanded free education and support services for children and families and driving policies and laws that break down barriers to care. To learn more, visit www.lls.org/childrens-initiative.

About The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research

The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research actively partners with scientists to accelerate research that will transform the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. The Mark Foundation fulfills its mission by supporting groundbreaking science carried out by individual investigators, multi-disciplinary teams, and inter-institutional collaborations in the United States and across the globe. Recognizing the obstacles that prevent scientific advances from improving patient outcomes, The Mark Foundation maintains a nimble, high-impact approach to funding research through grants for basic and translational cancer research and investments in early-stage companies that bridge the gap between bench and bedside. Since its launch in 2017, the Mark Foundation has awarded over \$90 million in grant funding to over 50 institutions in the U.S., the U.K. and Europe. To learn more, visit www.themarkfoundation.org

About The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group

The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group, a division of the Allen Institute, is dedicated to exploring the landscape of bioscience to identify and foster ideas that will change the world. The Frontiers Group directs funding through award mechanisms to accelerate our understanding of biology, including: Allen Discovery Centers at partner institutions for leadership-driven, compass-guided research, and Allen Distinguished Investigators for frontier explorations with exceptional creativity and potential impact. The Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group was founded in 2016 by the late philanthropist and visionary Paul G. Allen. For more information, visit allenfrontiersgroup.org.