



PRESS RELEASE  
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For Immediate Release  
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## HOPE FUNDS FOR CANCER RESEARCH AWARDS TWO POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS FOCUSED ON INNOVATIVE RESEARCH INTO DIFFICULT TO TREAT CANCERS

NEWPORT, RI -- June 5, 2008 -- Hope Funds for Cancer Research, a new organization dedicated to advancing research for the most difficult-to-treat cancers, announced today that it has selected the first two recipients of its Hope Funds Postdoctoral Fellowships. The Hope Funds Fellowships have a strong emphasis on innovation and risk and apply a venture capital investing approach to funding research.

"We're privileged to support these young scientists and hope they form a lifelong commitment to advancing the understanding of under-studied cancers. We believe these young investigators have the fearlessness to forge new paradigms and devise new approaches to treating these cancers that will lead to advancements in the field," stated Leah Rush Cann, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The Hope Funds received more than 100 applications from the country's most prestigious research institutions for these postdoctoral fellowships. The applications were reviewed by a global scientific advisory panel comprised of key-opinion-leader scientists working in oncology. Twenty-seven semi-finalists were identified and eight finalists were interviewed before the Hope Funds selected its two 2008 grantees. Each Fellow will receive \$87,000 over two years to fund their research, with the possibility for a third year of additional funding.

The 2008 Hope Funds Fellows are Pedro Medina, PhD from Yale University and Nathan Robison, MD from Children's Hospital at University of Southern California. Dr. Medina's project is in the area of microRNA as it relates to lung cancer. MicroRNAs are an exciting new field in the regulation of key biological processes that have been implicated in cancer development. Dr. Robison's project examines outcomes of non-radiation therapy on children with brain cancer. Irradiation of the brain and spinal cord are known to entail potentially devastating side effects for patients less than 10 years old at diagnosis and these patients may be able to be cured without radiation.

The 2008 Hope Funds Fellows named below exemplify the mission of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research:

**Pedro Medina, PhD, Yale University** in the laboratory of Frank Slack, PhD. MicroRNAs are small molecules that regulate the expression of genes, i.e. when or where our genes should be read and translated into proteins. As their name indicates, they are very small, and made from RNA, and not from protein, in contrast to previously discovered expression regulators. Due to their small size and unusual nature, microRNA had not been discovered until only a few years ago. "Recently, these regulators have been seen to play an important role in cancer development, and they have opened a new field to help us to understand cancer biology and improve cancer diagnosis, prognosis and therapy. However many questions about the microRNAs remain to be unveiled. In our project we will try to shed light on the involvement of microRNAs in cancer," said Dr. Medina.



**Nathan Robison, MD, Children's Hospital, Los Angeles** at the University of Southern California in the laboratory of Shahab Asgharzadeh, MD. The standard treatment for medulloblastoma includes radiation to the brain, which can cause severe brain damage in younger children. The goal in this project is to use measurements of gene activity to identify children who can be successfully treated without radiation. Medulloblastoma is the most common malignant brain tumor in children. "Our overall goal is to identify a clinically feasible biologic assay that can identify low risk medulloblastoma patients who may safely avoid radiation therapy, thus



potentially sparing a large number of children the devastating effects of neuraxis irradiation," stated Dr. Robison.

### Hope Funds Fellowships

The Hope Funds for Cancer Research funds research for highly innovative projects that challenge the traditional paradigms of understanding the causes, mechanisms, progression, disease markers or risk factors of the most difficult-to-treat cancers. The Hope Funds for Cancer Research considers each of the following criteria, with a strong emphasis on the innovation of the project, in evaluating research candidates: innovation and originality of the project; significance and direct relevance of the research proposal; approach and conceptual framework of the project; qualifications of the researcher and the researcher's mentors; quality of the overall research environment where the scientist is working. . The Hope Funds believes that it is important to emphasize youth and award grants to young scientists

### About the Hope Funds for Cancer Research

In 2006 the Hope Funds for Cancer Research was formed by individuals with experience in science, medicine, intellectual property law, investment banking, philanthropy, sociology and the arts to establish a funding vehicle that would take a rational scientific, medical and investment approach to granting money to the most innovative and promising research efforts to address the most difficult-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic, lung, liver, sarcomas, esophageal, brain, gastric and ovarian cancers. These cancers are insidiously aggressive illnesses that kill most of their victims within months, even with aggressive chemotherapy. The Trustees of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research believe that funding innovative research that could lead to breakthroughs in these areas and increase life expectancy in these types of cancers is at the core of its mission. The Hope Funds for Cancer Research is a 509(a)(1) charity under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service's code. For additional information about the organization, please visit <http://www.hope-funds.org> or call Leah Cann at 401-847-3286.

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