



Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Press Release

Alumni Fellow Receives Prestigious NIH Fellowship

For Immediate Release
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Newport, RI - September 2, 2014 - Hope Funds Fellow, Dr. Elsa Beyer Krall was awarded a Kirschstein-NRSA Postdoctoral Fellowship from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which will continue to support Dr. Beyer Krall's research for three more years. Dr. Beyer Krall completed her Hope Funds for Cancer Research Fellowship on June 30, 2014.

"The funding I received from Hope Funds for Cancer Research from 2011 - 2014 allowed me to obtain the preliminary data that convinced NIH the project was worth further funding. I am extremely grateful to the Hope Funds for supporting my research during the early stages of this work," stated Elsa Beyer Krall.

During the past three years, Dr. Beyer Krall has worked on three projects using large-scale screening approaches to identify novel cancer pathways, vulnerabilities, and mechanisms of drug resistance. These projects investigated cancers that have inappropriate activation of the protein STAT3; the protein YAP1 as a novel component of KRAS signaling; and how cancer cells become resistant to targeted therapies in lung cancer. Elucidating these mechanisms of resistance may lead to the identification of novel drug targets and the prevention or delay of drug resistance and patient relapse.

"This work aims to identify novel cancer pathways and therapeutic targets based on the particular genetic alterations that are present in a tumor," stated David Garrett, a Hope Funds for Cancer Research Trustee, "which could have impact in lung, colon and pancreatic cancer.

About Elsa Beyer Krall, Ph.D.

Dr. Beyer Krall is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Laboratory of William Hahn, M.D., Ph.D. at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Broad Institute. Prior to joining Dr. Hahn's lab, Elsa was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard Medical School in the laboratory of Kevin Struhl, Ph.D. Dr. Beyer Krall received her Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2010, and her B.S. in Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology, *magna cum laude*, from University of California Los Angeles in 2005. While at Harvard, Elsa received Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from the Derek Bok Center, was a Nominee for the Joseph R. Levenson Memorial Teaching Prize, and a Nominee for the Marquand Award at Harvard for Exceptional Advising and Counseling.

Elsa received a Hope Funds for Cancer Research Fellowship in 2011. Her project noted that while tumors are generally classified by the tissue in which they arise, for instance breast versus lung, advances in cancer genomics have increasingly allowed for the identification of the specific genetic alterations in a given tumor. The success of some targeted therapies have further argued for classifying tumors by mutation status and choosing treatment strategies accordingly. Rather than focusing on cancers in a particular tissue, this project centers on cancers with inappropriate activation of the STAT3 protein. Because STAT3 itself has been difficult to target therapeutically, the study aims to identify other weaknesses in these cancers that may be more "druggable" targets. This study involved several hundred cancer lines from different tissue types, allowing her to determine how common STAT3 activation is in different types of cancer and to identify novel drug targets in these tumors.

About Hope Funds for Cancer Research

The Hope Funds for Cancer Research was formed in 2006 by a group of concerned individuals who have experience in oncology, 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 interesting 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 research that could lead to breakthroughs in these areas and increase life expectancy in these types of cancers is at the core of our 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 401-847-3286.

Hope Funds for Cancer Research: Advancing Innovative Research in Understudied Cancers

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