



Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Press Release

Hope Funds Fellows Return to Research Labs in Wake of COVID-19

For Immediate Release
Media Contact:
John A. Wells
212-769-2170
media@hope-funds.org

Newport, RI - May 19, 2020 - As parts of the United States start to re-open after weeks of stay-at-home measures staving off the coronavirus, current Hope Funds for Cancer Research Fellows are starting to go back to work.

"All nine of our current postdoctoral fellows have been working at home since mid-March," said Leah Rush Cann, Chair of the Executive Committee, Hope Funds Board of Trustees. "Their labs have been closed, except for skeleton crews keeping essential elements of the labs working."

The lock-downs have given many researchers greater opportunities to focus on writing manuscripts, applying for grants and designing experiments. Fortuitously, many of the Hope Funds Fellows had recently finished experiments just prior to lock-down and were in the process of drafting publications, said Mrs. Cann.

Current postdoctoral Fellows include Matthew E. Griffin of The Rockefeller University, Sharon Louie of Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Mateusz Legut of NYU, Christopher Pirozzi from Duke University, Juan Manuel Schwartzman from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Mary Jane Tseng Mui Ching of the Whitehead Institute at MIT, Yaara Oren from the Broad Institute, Allesandra Dall'Agnese from the Whitehead Institute at MIT, Sri Raghavan from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Leanne Li from MIT.

Recently, Dr. Griffin, of The Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Chemical Biology & Microbial Pathogenesis, lead authored a paper in *Clinical Translation Immunology*. Dr. Legut, of the New York Genome Center at NYU, lead authored two papers, one in *Nature Biomedical Engineering* and the other in *Cell Reports*. Dr. Pirozzi, of Duke University Medical Center, has recently contributed to four papers, and Dr. Dall'Agnese contributed to a paper published in *Molecular Cell*.

"Dr. Dall'Agnese continues to do novel work in condensates, and Dr. Oren is doing impressive work in ovarian cancer," said Mrs. Cann. "Dr. Schwartzman and Dr. Pirozzi are both doing novel work on the IDH-1 target, and three Fellows,



Mat Legut, Matt Griffin, Mary Jane Tsang Mui Ching are doing innovative work in immunology."

It is estimated that in 2020 1.8 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer, and that more than 600,000 U.S patients with cancer will die in 2020. This is consistent with past years and most likely predictive of years to come.

In the current environment, FDA is focused on new clinical trials directly related to COVID-19. While cancer clinical trials that in some way incorporate COVID-19 are being opened, many other new clinical trials for new cancer treatments are being delayed. Clinical trials that were already open and enrolling patients are continuing with the enrolled patients, but enrolling new patients is uncertain at present.

"The spread of cancer does not stop for a pandemic," said Mrs. Cann. "We are grateful that our Hope Funds Fellows are able to continue to their work under these incredibly difficult circumstances, and are proud of their many and varied accomplishments."

Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Hope Funds for Cancer Research was formed in 2006 to establish a funding vehicle that would take a rational scientific, medical, and investment approach to making grants for the most innovative and promising research efforts to address the most difficult-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic, lung, liver, sarcomas, esophageal, brain, gastric, renal and ovarian cancers, as well as rare leukemias, lymphomas and MDS. 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 young, innovative researchers will lead to breakthroughs in these areas and increase life expectancy for those with these types of cancers. 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 www.hope-funds.org or call 401-847-3286.

Hope Funds for Cancer Research: Advancing innovative research in understudied cancers

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Hope Funds for Cancer Research, 174 Bellevue Avenue, Suite 208, Newport, RI 02840

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