

THE CANCER CENTER NEWSLETTER

a consortium of BCM · BTGH · TCH · TMH · VAMC

VOLUME 1, NO. 5

JULY/AUGUST 2003

A Collaboration among Baylor College of Medicine, The Methodist Hospital, Ben Taub Hospital, VA Medical Center, and Texas Children's Hospital

FIRST ANNUAL CANCER CENTER RETREAT AND SYMPOSIUM

The First Annual Cancer Center Retreat and Symposium will be held on Friday, November 7, 2003 at the Marriott Medical Center Hotel. There will be presentations from each of the programs and selected key cores of the Cancer Center. We will accept abstracts from all investigators for the poster session. **The deadline for abstracts is September 15.** Dr. John Halter is currently developing a website to obtain the abstract forms electronically. In the meantime, please contact Barbara Lee at (713) 394-6255 (balee@tmh.tmc.edu) or Shari Stark (713) 798-1354 (sharir@bcm.tmc.edu) for abstract requirements and forms. There will be sets of awards for the 1st and 2nd place winners in Basic and Clinical Research. There will also be a 1st place award in Translational Research.

Dr. Peter Traber will give the keynote address, and Dr. Michael Lieberman will provide a general overview of the Center.

The program agenda and additional information will follow. If you have any questions, contact Dr. Helen Heslop via email at hheslop@bcm.tmc.edu.

CANCER CENTER MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting (Wednesdays)

- September 17 @ 5 p.m. in Room 256A
- October 15 @ 5 p.m. in Room 256A
- November 19 @ 5 p.m. in Room 256A
- December 17 @ 5 p.m. in Room 256A

Core Directors' Meeting (Wednesdays)

- September 9 @ 3 p.m. in Room 256A*
- November 12 @ 3 p.m. in Room 256A

(*please note new date for September)

PILOT PROJECT AWARD RECIPIENTS

It is a pleasure to announce the Cancer pilot project awards for 2003. Originally we had planned to fund two projects; however, because of the large number of applications (18), we have decided to make three awards. A committee headed by Dr. O'Malley selected three applications for funding. Each of the following investigators will receive \$15,000 a year for two years beginning July 1, 2003:

Paula Amato, M.D., Department of OB/GYN for her project titled "The Role of COUPTF II in Endometrial Angiogenesis: Common Pathways for Implantation and Cancer."

Adrian Lee, Ph.D., Breast Center for his project titled "Role of the GH/IGF Axis in Mediating Pregnancy Protection from Breast Cancer."

Xiao-Feng Yang, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Medicine for his project titled "Removal of Immune Tolerance to Cancers and Enhancement of Immunotherapies for Cancer."

Please join us in congratulating these three teams.

DIRECTOR'S INITIATIVE IN TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

Dr. Michael Lieberman has set up a forum where investigators interested in translational research can meet to exchange ideas and network. Dr. Lieberman is planning a monthly meeting which he will lead that will serve as a focus for our efforts. The Cancer Center had another successful Director's Initiative in Translational Research meeting on Monday, June 9. He is encouraging all of you (whether basic scientists or clinicians) to attend these forums and hope that you will indicate your willingness to come to a session by emailing Shari Stark at sharir@bcm.tmc.edu. Please mark your calendar to attend.

September 15 @ 4 p.m. in Room 201A
Presentation of Core facilities

October 20 @ 4 p.m. in Room 201A
Presentation of Core facilities (continued)
The speaker will be Dr. Orla Connelly from the Nuclear Receptor Biology Program

November 17 @ 4 p.m. in Room 201A
The speaker will be Dr. Matthew Anderson, Department of OB/GYN

December 8 @ 4 p.m. in Room 201A
The speaker will be Dr. Ching Lau from the Pediatrics Program

STUDY ANNOUCEMENT

The American College of Radiology Imaging Network is pleased to announce the activation of ACRIN 6659, MR Imaging and MR Spectroscopic Imaging of Prostate Cancer Prior to Radical Prostatectomy: A Prospective Multi-Institutional Clinicopathological Study. Jeffrey Weinreb, M.D., is the study P.I, and 7 institutions are currently participating. The primary objective of this study is to compare the diagnostic accuracy of MRI versus MRI combined with MRSI for the localization of prostate cancer in patients who are scheduled to have radical prostatectomy surgery. To view a copy of the protocol, go to the ACRIN website: http://www.acrin.org/current_protocols.html.

CENTER FOR CELL AND GENE THERAPY RECEIVES \$5 MILLION FROM THE LEUKEMIA AND LYMPHOMA SOCIETY

Investigators from the Center for Cell and Gene Therapy have recently received a Specialized Center of Research (SCOR) Award sponsored by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Dr Helen Heslop is the Principal investigator of the research project entitled titled "Cellular Immunotherapy of Lymphoma." which was awarded 5 million dollars over 5 years. The SCOR consists of 3 translational projects and 3 cores. In addition to Dr Heslop other project or core leaders include Drs Malcolm Brenner, Cliona Rooney, Si Chen, Adrian Gee, Bambi Grilley, Heidi Weiss and Elio Vanin. The translational research projects in the SCOR will evaluate immunotherapy strategies in patients with lymphoma and Hodgkin's disease in collaboration with hematologists and oncologists at The Methodist Hospital, Ben Taub, Texas Children's Hospital and the VA. Dr. Heslop is a Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics in the Center for Cell and Gene Therapy and Director of the Adult Hemopoietic Stem Cell Transplant unit at The Methodist Hospital.

OTHER CANCER-RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Department of Defense (DOD)

Breast Cancer Research Program: Current funding opportunities include Center of Excellence Awards, Clinical Translational Research Awards and HBCU Collaborative Partnership Training Awards.

Invited full proposal deadline: August 7, 2003. All other mechanism submission deadlines have passed for FY03.

Ovarian Cancer Research Program: Proposal submission deadline for the FY03 program has passed. Funding opportunities for FY04 will be announced when information is available.

Please visit the Office of Research Home Page for the DOD award mechanisms and submission requirements.

Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT) Young Investigator Award

The Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT) supports the development of gene therapy approaches to the treatment of cancer. The goal of this program is to help advance gene therapy research into the causes, treatment and prevention of all types of cancer by promoting development of novel and innovative studies by young investigators. The program promotes basic, and pre-clinical research approaches utilizing cells and genes as medicine. ACGT will direct its grants into six main areas of gene therapy research that have demonstrated great promise: 1. Tumor-Specific Replicating Viruses and Bacteria; 2. Anti-angiogenesis; 3. Immune-mediated Gene Therapy and Cancer Vaccines; 4. Oncogenes/Suppressor Oncogenes/Apoptosis; 5. Tumor Targeting and Vector Development; and 6. Other Cancer Gene Therapy Research

Candidates for a Young Investigator Award must hold an MD, MPH, PhD, or equivalent degree and be a tenure-track Assistant Professor within five years of their initial appointment to this rank, at the time of award activation. The investigator must be conducting original research as an independent faculty member. ACGT has no citizenship restrictions, and research supported by the award must be conducted at medical schools and research centers only in the United States. Awards provide up to \$500,000 over 3 years, inclusive of a maximum of 10% indirect costs.

The deadline for the receipt of the Electronic Application and ACA Form is August 6, 2003 at 4pm E.S.T. Awards will be announced December 2003.

For more information on the program guidelines or application procedure, please visit ACGT's website at www.acgtfoundation.org.

Allison Neslage
Marketing Manager
96 Cummings Point Road
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 358-8000 x. 495
aneslage@acgtfoundation.org

THE METHODIST HOSPITAL 2004 FOUNDATION GRANTS AND AWARDS PROGRAM

Grant applications are now being accepted for The Methodist Hospital's Foundation's 2004 Grants and Awards Program. The program's purpose is to encourage excellence in medical and health care research activities at any hospital within The Methodist Hospital network (The Methodist Hospital; San Jacinto Methodist Hospital; Methodist Sugarland Hospital; and Methodist Willowbrook Hospital); and its aimed at the first-time researchers who otherwise would not have access to external funding sources. Over the course of the program's fifteen years, over 111 research projects totaling over \$4.7 million have been funded.

The Foundation is now accepting grant applications for possible funding beginning, January 1, 2004.

Applications must be received by the Foundation on or before Monday, October 20, 2003, by 5 p.m.

Eligible applicants include principal investigators who are members of the Provisional or Active Medical Staff at any of the Methodist hospitals at the time of application, employees of any of the Methodist hospitals or employees of joint Methodist/Baylor centers. The principal investigator must have minimal or no federal funding prior to the grant application; federal funding awarded after the Foundation grant is encouraged.

If you have any questions or to receive an application, please contact Genie Minner, by email at geniem@tmh.tmc.edu or by calling 832-667-5816.

Please send comments or ideas for future issues to Shari Stark, Cancer Center, One Baylor Plaza, Houston, TX 77030

Email: sharir@bcm.tmc.edu

Center Director

Michael W. Lieberman, M.D., Ph.D.

Newsletter Advisors

Powel H. Brown, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Director for Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences

Bert O'Malley, M.D., Associate Director for Basic Research

C. Kent Osborne, M.D., Associate Director for Clinical Research

Editor

Shari Stark