American Cancer Society and St. Baldrick's Foundation Award $1.2 Million in Research Grants Focused on Advancing Childhood Cancer Treatments

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ATLANTA – APRIL 22, 2022 - More than half of U.S. childhood cancer patients are treated in clinical trials created to answer specific questions that determine which of two treatment protocols achieve the best results. Rarely is there funding to go a step further to use this data to uncover new treatment options that improve care and survival.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) and St. Baldrick's Foundation recently awarded $1.2 million in a second round of Pilot Accelerator grants meant to fill this gap. The funding requires researchers use the data, biospecimens and resources gathered through clinical trials to accelerate the progression of previously undiscovered treatment options. Projects in this second cohort of grantees focus on lymphoma chemotherapy treatment outcomes, immunotherapy development to treat leukemia and lymphoma, and gliomas, a deadly and difficult to treat pediatric cancer. The following five institutions were awarded $240,000 grants for two-year projects.

Catherine Bollard, M.D., Children's Research Institute – Strategies to Overcome Immune Evasion in High-Risk Hodgkin Lymphoma using Combination T-Cell Therapies

Adam Green, M.D., University of Colorado, Denver – Which Pediatric HGG Patients Benefit from Temozolomide/CCNU

Heather Gustafson, Ph.D., Seattle Children's Hospital – The IL-18 Monocytic Cytokine Response Predicts Immunotherapy

Mark Souweidane, M.D., Weill Medical College of Cornell University -- Liquid Biopsy for Longitudinal Monitoring in Diffuse Midline Glioma (DMG) Patients

Aman Wadhwa, M.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham – Body Composition and Adverse Outcomes in Pediatric Hodgkin Lymphoma

"Through their support of the Cancer Moonshot, President Biden and Dr. Jill Biden have emphasized the importance of organizations working together to develop a comprehensive approach to fighting cancer," said Dr. Ellie Daniels, senior vice president of extramural discovery science at the American Cancer Society. "This partnership was born out of understanding that need for collaboration and recognizing an opportunity to open new avenues of research that unlock the full potential of existing clinical trials. Having new access to this data will hopefully speed the development and delivery of new cancer drugs for children."

Over the past 50 years, outcomes for children diagnosed with most types of cancer have largely improved. However, some cancers like brain tumors (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma or DIPG) remain fatal in children due to limited treatment and outcome advancements.

"The cancers found in children are substantially different than those found in adults, so they require different

treatments," said Kathleen Ruddy, CEO of the St. Baldrick's Foundation. "Using available data in a new way, allows us to understand why some kids respond well to treatment and others do not, resulting in more effective treatments that save kids' lives and allow them to live healthy after treatment."

In the first round of grants awarded in 2021, six institutions were awarded over $3 million to fund research focused on some of the deadliest childhood cancers, including neuroblastoma, pediatric acute lymphoma, and acute myeloid leukemia.

Approximately 10,470 children in the United States under the age of 15 will be diagnosed with cancer in 2022. Due to major treatment advances in recent decades, 85% of children with cancer survive 5 years or more, but survival rates can vary depending on the type of cancer and other factors. After accidents, cancer is the second leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 14.

For more information on support and resources available to children with cancer, go to https://www.cancer.org/treatment

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is on a mission to free the world from cancer. We invest in lifesaving research, provide 24/7 information and support, and work to ensure that individuals in every community have access to cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. For more information, visit cancer.org.

About the St. Baldrick's Foundation

Every 2 minutes, a child somewhere in the world is diagnosed with cancer. In the U.S., 1 in 5 will not survive. The St. Baldrick's Foundation, the largest non-government funder of childhood cancer research grants, is on a mission to give kids a lifetime by supporting the most promising research to find cures and better treatments for all childhood cancers. When you give to St. Baldrick's, you don't just give to one hospital – you support virtually every institution with the expertise to treat kids with cancer across the U.S. St. Baldrick's ensures that children fighting cancer now — and those diagnosed in the future — will have access to the most cutting-edge treatment, by supporting every stage of research, from new ideas in the lab to the development of new therapies, to lifesaving clinical trials. Join us at StBaldricks.org and help #GiveKidsALifetime.