American Cancer Society Awards New Research and Training Grants

Awards include 109 grants totaling more than $45 million in first of two cycles for 2017

April 3, 2017– The American Cancer Society, the largest non-government, not-for-profit funding source of cancer research in the United States, has approved funding for 109 research and training grants totaling $45,624,250 in the first of two grant cycles for 2017.

The grants will fund investigators at 75 institutions across the United States; 102 are new grants while seven are renewals of previous grants. Twenty-four of the grants will support the training of oncology nurses and social workers, an area that is currently underfunded. All the grants go into effect July 1, 2017. Highlights of the current cycle:

- **Pasi A. Janne, MD, PhD,** of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston has been awarded a five-year renewable Research Professorship. Dr. Janne has made seminal contributions in understanding and translating the therapeutic implications of genetic alterations in lung cancer, particularly within the context of drug resistance. By integrating laboratory-and clinical-based studies, Dr. Janne and his team now aim to develop and evaluate combination therapies for effectively treating genetically distinct subtypes of lung cancer.
- **Hani Goodarzi, PhD** from the University of California, San Francisco has received a major multi-year Research Scholar Grant to study metastatic breast cancer (MBC). The grant will start a detailed research program that combines state-of-the art computational and analytical tools with modern biochemical, cell biological, and animal studies to study a novel pathway, previously identified by his lab, that may be associated with cancer spread. Their work will expand the understanding of gene expression regulation in health and disease and provide novel targets for new therapies to reign in tumor progression and metastasis.
- **Michelle Mendoza, PhD** of the University of Utah will investigate ERK/RSK signals, associated with mutations in KRas and BRaf, and their role in cancer cell invasion, in hopes of leading to new therapeutic approaches.
- **Eric Bartee, PhD,** of the Medical University of South Carolina will investigate a novel therapeutic virus developed by his lab to potentially improve attacking cancer. The innovative strategy first selectively infects cancer cells and then bolsters anti-tumor immunity within and around the tumor.
- **Claudio Scafoglio, MD, PhD** of the University of California, Los Angeles proposes to use a newly identified 3D imaging technique that could allow not only for early diagnosis of lung cancer, but also to determine which patients are most likely to benefit from a novel metabolic treatment currently used in diabetes.
- **Gabrielle Rocque, MD** of the University of Alabama at Birmingham will look to develop an electronic treatment decision plan specifically for women with metastatic breast cancer (MBC). The treatment plans would integrate outcomes, patient preferences, and information about treatment options, and serve as a decision-aid for patients and their physicians to enhance shared decision-making and communicate decisions to others.
- **Lydia Pace, MD** at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston will investigate issues surrounding the implementation of BRCA1/2 mutation testing into primary care to address the need for access to cancer screening, particularly for high risk individuals, with the goal of developing an intervention to systematically educate and engage primary care physicians in BRCA1/2 testing.

Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has funded research and training of health professionals to investigate the causes, prevention, and early detection of cancer, as well as new treatments, cancer survivorship, and end of life support for patients and their families. In those 70 years, the American Cancer Society’s extramural research grants program has devoted more than $4.5 billion to cancer research and has funded 47 Nobel Prize winners.

The Council for Extramural Research also approved 88 grant applications for funding, totaling $47,908,000 that could not be funded due to budgetary constraints. These “pay-if” applications represent work that passed the Society’s multi-disciplinary review process but are beyond the Society’s current funding resources. They can be

and often are subsidized by donors who wish to support research that would not otherwise be funded. In 2016, more than $9 million in additional funding helped finance 35 “pay-if” applications.

For more information about the American Cancer Society Research Program, visit http://www.cancer.org/research.