American Cancer Society Awards New Research and Training Grants

Nation's largest non-government, not-for-profit cancer research funder awards 77 grants totaling nearly $38 million in second of two cycles for 2015

ATLANTA – October 1, 2015– The American Cancer Society, the largest non-government, not-for-profit funding source of cancer research in the United States, has approved funding for 77 research and training grants totaling nearly $38 million in the second of two grant cycles for 2015. The grants will fund investigators at 56 institutions across the United States; 64 are new grants while 13 are renewals of previous grants. The grants go into effect January 1, 2016.

Among the new awards are two prestigious American Cancer Society Clinical Research Professor Awards:

- Dr. Bradley Bernstein at Massachusetts General Hospital is working to understand the molecular mechanisms that determine which genes are turned on or off in a given cell. His long interest in glioblastoma has led to advances in understanding epigenetic regulation of roles in this cancer. Dysfunctional gene switches drive tumor growth and suppress normal checkpoint genes, which can lead to the development of cancer. This project will study the structures and switches in individual cells from tumors and in laboratory tumor models, with the goal of developing new strategies to address drug resistance in glioblastoma, as well as some other tumor types
- Dr. Anne M. Villeneuve at Stanford University is investigating how the "molecular machines" in cells that detect and repair breaks in DNA operate to ensure that normal, intact chromosome structure is restored before cells divide. This prevents genomic instability that could lead to cancer. Her lab will investigate these processes using a special type of cells in which DNA breaks occur very frequently and are repaired in a highly regulated manner, making it possible to investigate this complex molecular machinery. They hope the work will lead to the discovery of new components of DNA repair or DNA damage, which could serve as targets for future cancer therapies.

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 nearly 70 years, the American Cancer Society's extramural research grants program has devoted more than $4.3 billion to cancer research.

The Council for Extramural Research also approved 98 grant applications for funding totaling more than $58 million that could not be funded due to budgetary constraints. These "pay-if" grants represent work that passed the Society's multi-disciplinary review process but are beyond the Society's current funding resources. These "pay-if" grants can be and often are subsidized by donors who wish to support research that would not otherwise be funded. In 2014, more than $5.6 million in additional funding helped finance 27 "pay-if" grants.

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

###