



curesToday

Gateway for Cancer Research has been devoted to funding Phase I and Phase II human clinical trials for more than 29 years. See how you advance medical science by making those trials possible!

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We are dedicated to the well-being of cancer patients

by Michael Burton, President and CEO, Gateway for Cancer Research



are rising to the pandemic challenge, and Gateway is proud to support their promising work.

At Gateway for Cancer Research, our vision is to create a healthier world for all as we seek to put an end to cancer as we know it. Today, the nation and the world face unprecedented challenges to our health and well-being.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, cancer patients face unique challenges to their physical and emotional health. Some may be reluctant to travel to a hospital for care, and many clinical trials have been disrupted and delayed. We are addressing this challenge head-on. I am pleased to share with you Gateway's newest grant program which funds early phase clinical trials that leverage technology-informed or decentralized strategies like telemedicine, remote monitoring, wearables, e-consent, mobile nursing and other assets that "bring the trial to the patient." Cancer researchers

are rising to the pandemic challenge, and Gateway is proud to support their promising work.

In this edition of *CuresTODAY* you will also find stories of hope and inspiration. You'll meet one rising teenager who overcame a brain tumor thanks in part to the innovative use of "tumor paint". And you will read about Gateway's inaugural Discovery Grant recipient, who is leading a clinical trial that will rally the immune systems of patients with inoperable pancreatic cancer to better fight the disease.

Thank you for your continued support during these uncertain times. Together, we are changing the future of cancer care. We hope that you, your family and loved ones continue to stay healthy and safe. ■

99 CENTS

OF EVERY DOLLAR RECEIVED DIRECTLY FUNDS CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS



Liesel's Hopeful Future

“I rejoice that I am alive and capable”

For Liesel Von Imhof, a Gateway-funded cancer treatment trial offered hope for the future after receiving a difficult diagnosis.

At 16, Liesel was a high-achieving high school student who played multiple varsity sports, was honored as class valedictorian and was in the midst of preparing for an Ivy League college career. While she had experienced severe migraines since she was 14, her pediatrician attributed them to her many extracurricular activities and academic pressures. However, a routine eye exam in July 2016 revealed an irregularity in one of Liesel's

“This journey has made me a more empathetic person. I've always been confident in my abilities, but this experience provided an unexpected test. I have been deeply humbled and am more grateful. I rejoice that I am alive and capable.” - LIESEL

eyes. She was sent directly to the hospital emergency room, where doctors immediately ordered an MRI. The test

showed that a brain tumor the size of a ping-pong ball was blocking the flow of cerebral spinal fluid, leading to swelling, pressure and, ultimately, Liesel's headaches.

She was referred and admitted to Seattle Children's

Hospital where, as fate would have it, Sarah Leary, MD, a pediatric neuro-oncologist and Gateway-funded researcher, was leading a clinical trial that could potentially alter Liesel's journey. Dr. Leary was investigating the safety of the drug BLZ-100, commonly referred to as tumor paint. When administered, the drug attaches to tumor cells, effectively causing them to light up or glow under special lights. This enhances a surgeon's ability to differentiate between disease and normal, healthy tissue. Tumor paint aids in the preservation of healthy tissue, which can be instrumental in improving post-surgical quality of life. Using Dr. Leary's innovative tumor paint protocols, surgeons successfully removed Liesel's tumor without causing irreversible damage to her brain.

Three weeks after surgery, Liesel returned home. Although she experienced moments of short-term memory loss, she was determined to go back to school and start her senior year in August. She continued healing in the weeks and months that followed, and she was even able to resume playing sports!

Liesel headed off to Harvard University, where she continues to excel, pursuing her dream to study biomedical engineering. ■



While her peers started their senior year of high school, Liesel was in the hospital participating in a Gateway-funded trial.

“If we can improve surgery, we may save more lives than any of the drugs invented in this decade.”

— Dr. Sarah Leary



Liesel with her mom, Natasha, at high school graduation as valedictorian.

/ Word CUREiosity / Decentralized Medicine

Definition: The practice of medicine at a distant satellite site of an institution or health system, ideally closer to the patient's home or at the patient's home itself.

Application: Decentralized medicine increases patient access to care by utilizing innovative technologies such as telemedicine, wearable health devices and remote monitoring. This empowers patients and enables them to better manage their health, even when they're unable to see their care team in person. As a result, it is effective in improving patient outcomes.

Inaugural Gateway Discovery Grant Awardee Announced.....

Researcher focuses study on treatment for aggressive cancers

David Linehan, MD, a surgical oncologist at the University of Rochester and Wilmot Cancer Institute was awarded the inaugural Discovery Grant for his immunotherapy trial to treat patients with inoperable pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC). The Gateway Discovery Grant was established in 2019 through a scientific partnership between Gateway for Cancer

“Gateway’s longstanding commitment to funding patient-centered, groundbreaking research has been essential to bringing this trial to fruition. With substantial funds from the Discovery Grant, our team will be able to bring this promising study to the bedside for patients who need new treatment options the most. I am grateful to have been selected by Gateway for this prestigious grant award and look forward to activating the trial for the benefit of those facing a difficult pancreatic cancer diagnosis.” - DR. DAVID LINEHAN

Research and Conquer Cancer. The goal of the grant program is to identify compelling areas of inquiry in the field of cancer research and fund the talented clinician-scientists who are best positioned to pursue these studies.

This biennial \$1.5 million grant program represents a significant new source of funding for clinician-scientists poised to advance transformational breakthroughs in cancer research.

Gateway understands the urgent need to accelerate the pace of cancer research for patients with advanced PDAC. Investing in clinical research that explores novel approaches such as Dr. Linehan’s, we are able to support

courageous patients facing a cancer diagnosis with more effective treatments that focus on improved quality of life.

PDAC is one of the most aggressive cancers, and with a 5-year survival rate of only 9%, it is the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths. Research advances in conventional chemotherapy have been somewhat effective in controlling the disease, but response rates are poor (only 20%-30% of patients benefit) and there is significant decline in quality of life. Surgery, which is challenging and technically demanding, currently provides the best chance of survival, assuming the tumor can be surgically removed and that it has not spread elsewhere in the body.

Dr. Linehan’s clinical trial will test the use of a dual immunotherapy approach in combination with standard chemotherapy to treat inoperable and locally advanced PDAC. Immunotherapy drugs will activate the immune system to fight against the pancreatic tumors, enhancing the effectiveness of the chemotherapy in targeting and eradicating the tumor cells.

The need for new therapies and techniques to improve existing treatment protocols will be ever-present as the medical community strives to continually improve patient outcomes. Linehan’s study aims to address a major obstacle in pancreatic cancer. Support from the Gateway Discovery Grant program means that more than 60 patients with inoperable or spreading PDAC will be given a new treatment option during the next three years as part of the first phase of the study. ■



Dr. David Linehan

Ways to Give - Looking to Give Back?.....

Valued Cause Partner

A longtime Cause Partner of Gateway, ONEHOPE makes a difference for non-profits around the globe and has introduced new ways to fundraise for your favorite charity from home! Connect with loved ones by hosting a virtual wine tasting party with 10% of eligible wine purchases going directly back to cancer research. For more information, visit OneHopeWine.com/Host. ■



Donor Spotlight

A physician passionate about providing the best treatment available to his patients, Mark Zafereo, MD, a surgical oncologist at MD Anderson Cancer Center understands the importance of clinical trials in achieving breakthroughs in treating rare cancers. Utilizing his network of family and friends, Dr. Zafereo successfully raised \$30,000 for anaplastic thyroid cancer research! To find out how you can make a difference in the future of cancer care, contact us at contact@gatewaycr.org or by calling 888-221-2873. ■



Dr. Mark Zafereo

Bringing the Trial to the Patient

Ensuring continuity of patient access to investigational studies

Gateway for Cancer Research is proud to announce a new grant program to fund clinical trials using mobile technology and telemedicine to advance cancer science and care. The impact of COVID-19 on clinical studies and the patients who depend on them has revealed difficulties in requiring patients to “go to the trial.” Social distancing policies, concerns about travel to clinical settings for treatment, and steps to reduce COVID-19 transmission have interrupted cancer treatments across the country.

Gateway is committed to finding solutions to help overcome these obstacles. Our hope is that these trials will increase patient access to clinical studies during this time or during future events that threaten clinical trials or patient access to cancer care at large. Grants will be awarded for early phase clinical studies that put the patient at the center of a trial through virtual

or decentralized treatment therapies while also advancing technology-informed strategies, such as telemedicine, wearables, remote monitoring, and mobile nursing.

“At Gateway, patients are at the center of everything we do and the impact of the pandemic on their access to clinical trials has been deeply troubling,” said Michael Burton, President and CEO of Gateway. “The field clearly needs more robust methods and tools to ensure continuity of access to investigational therapies during this pandemic and beyond. To that end, we are pleased to announce this funding opportunity to accelerate decentralized clinical studies that put the patient at the center of trial design.” ■



4th Annual VINO con Stelle scheduled for April 23, 2021

Vino con Stelle was postponed to ensure the health and well-being of our community. We hope you'll join us next spring to raise funds and support vital cancer research for courageous patients around the world.

For more information, visit VinoConStelle.com

Cancer Screening During the COVID-19 Pandemic

It's always important to catch cancer early

COVID-19 has challenged us all, and many people have postponed or canceled routine cancer screenings due to risks related to the novel coronavirus. However, staying on top of your health and catching early signs of cancer are always important, even during a pandemic.

Here are a few tips for safely scheduling your screening:

- The American Cancer Society recommends that if you have signs or symptoms that might be from cancer, for instance, a lump in the breast or blood in the stool, discuss this with your doctor right away.
- Discuss with your doctor how to balance the risks and benefits of being screened now or postponing. You will need to consider your personal and family

history, risk factors, and the timing of your last screening.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following tips for reducing the risk of COVID-19 if you choose to undergo screening:

- Patients should be pre-screened for COVID-related symptoms before each appointment.
- Everyone should maintain physical distance in waiting rooms and patient care areas.
- Everyone, including patients and staff, should wear a face covering or face mask, where appropriate.
- There should be frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer by staff, patients and visitors. ■



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