

Letter from the President



Michael Burton
President and CEO

As we all continue to navigate our way through the COVID-19 era we know one thing for certain: cancer does not stop for a pandemic.

We also know the pandemic has significantly disrupted cancer clinical trials. Cancer researchers are facing unprecedented operational challenges as healthcare and laboratory resources are diverted to COVID-19 response, and cancer patients may decline to

participate in clinical trials if it means they must travel to a hospital or other clinical setting.

At Gateway for Cancer Research, patients are at the center of everything we do. The impact of the pandemic on their access to clinical trials has been deeply troubling. To ensure continuity of patient access to investigational therapies, Gateway launched a new grant program that seeks to better leverage telemedicine and related innovations like remote monitoring, wearables, e-consent and mobile nurse management, to bring trials to the patient and not require the patient to go to the trial.

The response from many of the top cancer centers in the U.S. and abroad has been so overwhelmingly positive that Gateway is committing a substantial amount of funding to this program. In this issue you'll learn that Gateway's Research and Grants Committee reviewed an all-time high number of grant proposals. Cancer isn't quarantined and we are motivated by the innovative ideas and commitment of talented clinician-scientists around the world to advancing cancer treatments and cures during the pandemic and beyond.

To help us best serve you, we want to hear from you. How has COVID-19 affected your research and patient care? Are you adjusting centralized clinical trials to better facilitate remote access? What challenges are you encountering? Please feel free to reach out to us directly at Research@GatewayCR.org, and share this newsletter with your colleagues so they're aware of Gateway funding and collaboration opportunities.

As always, on behalf of the entire Gateway team, thank you for your partnership and dedication to patients everywhere and to moving us closer to ending cancer as we know it.

Sincerely,



Michael Burton
President and CEO, Gateway for Cancer Research

New Grants Program Brings Cancer Research to the Patient Doorstep



COVID-19 has disrupted cancer research and patient care on numerous levels. Patient safety concerns regarding travel to clinical settings for treatment, and tactics to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus have led to significant delays and suspension of clinical studies at cancer centers across the country and abroad.

Continuing its commitment to support clinician-scientists and keeping patients at the center of their work, Gateway for Cancer Research recently launched a new grant program to fund clinical trials leveraging mobile technology and telemedicine to advance cancer science and care by bringing trials to their doorstep. Gateway will award grants in the range of \$400,000 to \$600,000 for early phase clinical oncology studies that drive technology-informed, decentralized trial strategies, such as telemedicine, wearables and mobile applications, and remote monitoring.

In the first round of funding, Gateway's Research and Grants Committee reviewed five decentralized research proposals including:

- A study to determine whether mobile-health delivery of a comprehensive lifestyle counseling program increases healthy lifestyle behaviors and improves quality of life and clinical outcomes for overweight women with breast cancer.
- A feasibility study of a cervical cancer screening program in Taiyuan, China, with patient enrollment, consent, self-sampling appointment, results and follow-up managed through a telemedicine platform versus traditional in-person cervical cancer screening at a health care facility.

Continues

- Two decentralized studies designed to drive research on understudied rare cancers by expanding patient access:
 - An approach providing personalized genomic analysis to patients with rare cancers and their treating physicians to inform treatment and clinical trial options. The other would extend an early-phase clinical trial of a targeted therapeutic to patients with specific rare gene mutations and coordinates testing, monitoring and related care with their local oncologists through telehealth visits.
 - A remote study of the effectiveness of an online psychotherapy intervention in reducing emotional distress in patients with advanced or metastatic cancer.

The Board of Directors awarded funding for a proposal at its July meeting, and more details will follow in the next issue of *ImpactTODAY*. Due to the high interest from cancer researchers around the globe, Gateway is focusing the majority of its funding for FY 2021 to this decentralized grants program. To apply today, visit <https://gatewaycr.smapply.org/> and select 'GFCR Decentralized Grant Program' to begin your application. For immediate questions please email Research@GatewayCR.org.



FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Integrative Oncology

Integrative oncology pairs conventional cancer therapies such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation with evidence-based complementary therapies to manage symptoms and side effects. A growing body of research suggests that striking a balance of physical, emotional and spiritual wellness through integrative care can improve patient outcomes and quality of life during cancer treatment.

Gateway is committed to expanding the body of evidence-based research in this emerging field and will be making an exciting announcement in the coming months. Several studies with this focus are currently funded and underway, including:

- **Acupuncture and Breast Cancer:** Many women who undergo surgery for breast cancer have chronic pain following treatment, which may cause depression, anxiety and sleeplessness, in turn leading to extreme fatigue. In addition, pain medications can cause drowsiness, nausea and constipation – unpleasant side effects that worsen quality of life. **Lorenzo Cohen, PhD**, and colleagues at MD Anderson Cancer Center are investigating whether acupuncture can help reduce chronic pain, improve physical function and improve overall quality of life for women following surgical treatment for breast cancer.
- **Nutritional Supplements and Pediatric HCT:** Hematopoietic cell transplant is a standard treatment for children with blood cancers. Following treatment, many patients are unable to eat and require intravenous or nasogastric feeding. The lipid emulsion commonly used to provide essential nutrients is soybean based, and can cause adverse side effects including metabolic instability, bile duct dysfunction or anorexia. **Alexandra Carey, MD**, and colleagues at Boston Children's Hospital are examining whether providing a fish oil lipid emulsion supplement high in omega-3 fatty acids to children undergoing HCT will reduce inflammation to prevent transplant rejection, increase healthy blood lipid levels to improve recovery, and avoid the complications associated with soybean-based lipid emulsion.
- **Exercise and Solid Tumors:** **Lee Jones, PhD**, and colleagues at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center are investigating the role of exercise in helping people prepare for, tolerate and recover from cancer treatment. To help confirm observational evidence that exercise minimizes the occurrence of cancer and improves treatment outcomes, researchers are treating patients newly-diagnosed with breast, prostate or endometrial cancer with different "doses" of exercise in the short period between diagnosis and surgery. By comparing tumor biopsies of patients taken at time of diagnosis and at time of surgery, they will determine whether exercise alters cancer biology and tumor progression, and identify the most appropriate "dose" of exercise, and predict which patients and/or types of tumors are most responsive to exercise.



REPORT FROM THE RESEARCH AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

Gateway is pleased to announce Sameek Roychowdhury, MD, PhD, of The James – The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center has been appointed to manage the peer review function of Gateway's Research and Grants Committee, responsible for the review of research grant applications submitted to the organization.

At its most recent meeting, the committee reviewed and scored seven grant proposals in immunotherapy, cancer vaccines and targeted therapies, including:

- Exploring the effectiveness of combining immune checkpoint inhibitors nivolumab and ipilimumab to treat INI1-negative cancers in children and young adults
- Evaluating safety and efficacy of a novel vaccine therapy in combination with checkpoint blockade to treat pediatric gliomas
- Developing new strategies for treating T-cell lymphomas using p53-activator idasanutlin in combination with gemcitabine
- Evaluating the effectiveness of combination antibody drug conjugate sacituzumab govitecan with pembrolizumab in patients with hormone receptor-positive metastatic breast cancer
- Piloting a perpetual trial combining precision oncology and artificial intelligence platforms to identify novel, personalized, double and triple drug combinations for treating chemotherapy-resistant ovarian cancer
- Utilizing genetic, immune and imaging biomarkers to tailor combination immunotherapy and targeted therapies for anaplastic thyroid cancer
- Studying the safety and effectiveness of fecal microbiota transplantation to manage immune-mediated colitis, a devastating toxicity associated with immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy in various cancer types

Thank you to all researchers who submitted grant proposals.

Do you have an innovative idea for a Phase I or Phase II clinical trial that needs funding? Gateway accepts research funding proposals on a rolling basis. For more information and to apply online, visit our website.

Meet ...
Sameek Roychowdhury,
MD, PhD



*Associate Professor, Translational Therapeutics
The James – The Ohio State University Comprehensive
Cancer Center*
Research and Grants Committee, Gateway for Cancer Research

Dr. Sameek Roychowdhury is a medical oncologist specializing in treating patients with advanced prostate and colorectal cancers. He leads a research team in precision oncology – developing diagnostics, tools and methods to analyze and interpret genomics data to identify the optimal therapies for cancer patients.

Gateway: *Your research area of interest is precision oncology, specifically using genomically-informed “smart drugs” to target cancer and combination therapy with immunotherapy. What is/are the big question(s) you are exploring? What is the next frontier for precision oncology?*

Sameek Roychowdhury: Our Team's goal is to use genomics and big data to help individualize therapies for patients with advanced cancer. One of the new topics we are studying is the field of immunogenomics – using genetics to understand and leverage the immune system against cancer.

Gateway: *In addition to serving on Gateway's Research & Grants Committee, what other peer review activities are you involved in? From that perspective, what are some cancer research trends you are seeing?*

Sameek Roychowdhury: I am regularly involved in reviewing grants for the American Lung Association, the Prostate Cancer Foundation, and Pelotonia (an Ohio non-profit that raises funds through cycling events to support innovative cancer research). I have also reviewed grants ad hoc for other foundations, cancer centers, and the National Institutes of Health. I particularly enjoy reviewing for Pelotonia because it involves young investigators and trainees at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral level. These grants support the up and coming bright young scientists and their new ideas.

Gateway: *What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on cancer research, both from the perspective of your work at The James and across the greater research community?*

Sameek Roychowdhury: Certainly COVID-19 has changed many things in our daily lives, from grocery shopping, work, health care and research. While COVID-19 has affected these things, with appropriate adjustments, it's my hope that we can continue all of these activities safely and deliver top notch cancer care and research. Certainly funding sources will be impacted, which makes foundations such as Gateway even more important for supporting cancer research.

Continues

Gateway: *In the COVID-19 era, how has your approach to research and patient care changed? We understand you are launching virtual clinical trials at The James?*

Sameek Roychowdhury: We have taken measures to limit face-to-face interactions as much as possible, including using telemedicine when feasible, to reduce the risk to patients and health care workers. It will be interesting to see how telemedicine shapes up in the coming year while we continue to live with flattening the COVID-19 curve. This may present an opportunity to develop innovative clinical trials.

Gateway: *Fill in the blank: My colleagues would be interested to know that I...*

Sameek Roychowdhury: ...am a Star Trek fan, and I do not believe in no-win scenarios.

Gateway is grateful to Dr. Roychowdhury for his service of managing the peer review for the Research and Grants Committee, and for his partnership and steadfast commitment to healing cancer patients today while helping to advance the most promising cancer research.



UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

14-17

CRI-ENCI-AACR Cancer Immunotherapy Conference

September - New York, NY



IN THE NEWS

Medpage Today

A New Mobile App Can Help Oncologists Who Treat Patients With Immuno-oncology Drugs to Monitor for Side Effects

August 6, 2020

University of Maryland

Researchers Develop Novel Test for "Microtentacles" on Breast Cancer Cells

August 4, 2020

Nature Communications

Reversal of Pre-existing, NGFR-driven Tumor and Immune Therapy Resistance

August 7, 2020

Nature Communications

A Decade of Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors in Cancer Therapy

July 30, 2020

CURE

Patients Experiencing COVID-19 Symptoms at Increased Risk of Death Despite Negative SARS-CoV-2 Tests

July 20, 2020

GatewayCR.ORG



/DemandCures



@DemandCures



@DemandCures



500 E. Remington Rd.,
Ste. 200, Schaumburg
IL 60173



1.888.221.2873



Research@GatewayCR.org