

May 18, 2012

MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

Dear Pancreatic Cancer Association of Western New York ,

We here at the University of Rochester and Wilmot Cancer Center are grateful for your important past and ongoing efforts in raising awareness and funding for pancreatic cancer research. Over the past two years we have used the over \$70,000 you have raised to better understand this disease at its most basic level. Please see a summary of our progress below.

Funding is being used towards basic research in pancreatic cancer being done by Aram Hezel, a medical oncologist and research scientist, in collaboration with Hartmut (or Hucky) Land, Chair of the Department of Biomedical Genetics. Drs. Hezel and Land are focused on understanding the basic molecular changes that occur in the pancreas and how these changes promote cancer formation, growth and metastasis. Dr. Hezel is using models of pancreatic cancer to explore the function of a key gene identified by Dr. Land's group. Dr. Land focuses on looking for new vulnerabilities in cancer cells and has identified a number of potential new cancer targets of which this is the highest priority. We have learned that this gene is turned on early in the course of pancreatic cancer development and remains important to promoting cancer growth through the cancers later stages. We have used funding to evaluate this gene in the best quality and most comprehensive models of the disease in order to learn if this could offer a new point of attack against pancreatic cancer. Based on work to date, it appears that if this gene is inactivated, or turned off, the cancer grows much more slowly. Additionally, since this gene is turned on at the earliest stages of cancer it is possible that this could serve as an early detection marker. We are very excited about these results and are focused on a new set of experiments focused on fully understanding how this gene helps pancreatic cancer grow. We expect to have a publication together describing this in the coming year and to apply for additional funding to support this avenue of research.

Dr. Land has identified a number of other genes that we think are likely to be important for pancreatic cancer growth. As we plan work in the coming years, we are thinking about how to fully research all of these promising leads. Presently we are focused on prioritizing these genes. The success of the work described above provides further enthusiasm for tackling more of these potential new targets in cancer.

The Pancreatic Cancer Association of Western New York has enabled research done here in Rochester, NY that would not have otherwise been possible. We are extremely grateful for your support and look forward to continued progress. The efforts of all the families, friends and patients affected by pancreatic cancer not only provide critical funding but also unparalleled motivation to those of us here doing this work.

With sincere appreciation,



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