

BiO

Oregon Bioscience News Quarterly

Providence Health Receives NCORP Cancer Grant

By Linda Barney, Barney and Associates

A new five-year grant of \$6.6 million from the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP) has been awarded to the Pacific Cancer Research Consortium (PCRC), which includes [Providence Cancer Center](#) in Portland, Swedish Cancer Institute in Seattle and St. Luke's Mountain States Tumor Institute in Boise. The NCORP grant will provide cancer patients in Oregon, Washington and three other Western states with improved access to care and clinical trials. Providence Health & Services will receive approximately \$2 million for cancer clinical trials and services as part of this grant.

Keith Lanier, M.D., from Providence Cancer Center, Gary Goodman, M.D., from Swedish Cancer Institute, and Paul Montgomery, M.D., from St. Luke's Mountain States Tumor Institute are the three site principal investigators and will share governance of the program. Providence Portland Medical Center has been serving their community for 26 consecutive years as the home and a founding member of the NCI's Community Clinical Oncology Program Western Oncology Research Consortium (WORC).

"The new consortium will allow us to continue our service and broaden our efforts in outreach to minority and underserved populations and in cancer care delivery research."

Dr. Keith Lanier, Providence Cancer Center

Cancer research at Providence Health

The [Robert W. Franz Cancer Research Center](#), directed by Dr. Walter J. Urbaniak, M.D., Ph.D., is a world-class research facility located inside the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute of the Providence Cancer Center. The main area of investigation at the Robert W. Franz Cancer Research Center is immunotherapy which is a specialized field of study focused on triggering the immune system to fight cancer. Their research has led to testing vaccines in patients with cancers of the lung, prostate, kidney, breast and skin. The center houses a suite of class-10,000 cancer research laboratories that are GMP-capable. These facilities are fully equipped to process and prepare autologous and allogeneic tumor vaccines as well as processing and expanding PBMC and T-cells for adoptive immunotherapy.

The importance of the NCORP grant

The traditional route for funding research has always been government funding. The reality is that government funding is shrinking. Providence Cancer Center had a previous grant under the NCI but the large clinical trial programs were being eliminated. Dr. Bernard Fox, a researcher with Providence Cancer Center in the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute and the CEO of UbiVac states, "The NCORP grant mechanism is a new grant program being put into place to help support patients on clinical trials. The NCORP grants are even more important because they will help give patients access to clinical trials regardless of their health system."

NCORP grant supports Providence clinical trials across five states

The NCORP grant will have major impact on cancer research, clinical trials and cancer treatment options. It will be transformative for Providence cancer patients across five states because they can be part of cancer clinical trials in their own communities instead of having to travel to major medical centers to participate. Clinical trials at Providence Cancer Center are supported by teams of physicians, nurses and other cancer specialists who have up-to-the-minute

knowledge of the latest treatment options for a variety of cancers. By working in close proximity to patients and to each other, Providence researchers, physicians and clinical trials staff members enjoy a collaborative, patient-centered relationship that enhances both research and patient care.

Providence estimates that there will be more than 70 clinical trials involving more than 300 patients. The type of clinical trials will include cancer prevention, cancer control, cancer screening, quality of life and cancer care delivery.

“The PCRC consortium is an important advancement in our efforts to improve the future of patient care,” said Walter J. Urba, M.D., Ph.D., director, Robert W. Franz Cancer Research Center in the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute, Providence Cancer Center. “The large population of patients who come to our sites for care and the community members who collaborate in that care, combined with our demonstrated strengths in clinical trials, make this new consortium a valuable member of the NCORP. I am confident we will fulfill the mission of the NCI and NIH of bringing state-of-the-art cancer clinical trials and research programs to the communities we serve.”

Dr. Walter Urba, Director of the Robert W. Franz Cancer Research Center

Impact of a cancer grant for Oregon health systems and patients

Dr. Fox states, “This type of grant will clearly impact the landscape of the bioscience sector in Oregon. By increasing the number of cancer patients being studied in clinical trials, it would allow researchers to obtain answers faster and therefore translate it to the world more rapidly. Adding \$2 million to cancer research at Providence will increase inventions and, if licensed to Oregon-based companies or used to spin-out new biotechs, will benefit the biotech community in the state.

###

Linda Barney is the founder and owner of Barney and Associates, a technical / marketing writing, training and Web design firm in Beaverton, Oregon that provides writing, training and Web content for the high-tech, government, biotechnology, energy, medical, sustainability and scientific communities. Linda has written articles for a variety of clients as well as the Software Association of Oregon, the Oregon Bioscience Association, the Clean Technology Alliance, CitizenTekk, Innotech, EclipseCon, OSCON, Smart Grid Transactive Energy and Supercomputing Conferences. She has acted as editor of the Microsoft Application Development Resources ezine and the Oregon Bioscience Association newsletter. Contact Linda at linda@barneyassoc.com.