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# STAND UP TO CANCER FUNDS HIGH-RISK/HIGH-REWARD CANCER RESEARCH BY 13 YOUNG SCIENTISTS

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**Dec. 7, 2009, New York, N.Y./Los Angeles, Calif.:** Stand Up ToCancer (SU2C) announced today that it is awarding \$9.68 million to support high-risk/high-reward cancer research conducted by 13 young scientists. Over a three-year period, each investigator will receive a total of up to \$750,000 as part of SU2C's Innovative Research Grants program, which supports the next generation of cancer research leaders.

"We asked our best and brightest young researchers to step outside their comfort zones and strive to make big differences with bold initiatives," said Richard D. Kolodner, Ph.D., professor of medicine at the University of California, San Diego, senior researcher at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research in La Jolla, Calif., and chairman of the review committee for the grants. "If these projects come to fruition, some of the ideas could be game-changers in cancer research."

The Innovative Research Grants program is the second major funding commitment made by Stand Up To Cancer. Earlier this year, SU2C awarded \$73.6 million to five interdisciplinary, multi-institutional Dream Teams with more than 300 members from 20 institutions. All of these SU2C-funded projects focus on groundbreaking translational research aimed at getting new therapies to patients as quickly as possible. Since its launch in May 2008, SU2C has raised more than \$100 million from a wide range of philanthropic, corporate, and organizational donors, as well as the general public, much of it in connection with an SU2C telecast on September 5, 2008, that aired simultaneously on ABC, CBS, and NBC.

"By any measure, Stand Up To Cancer has been making significant progress in facilitating new ways of doing cancer research," said Laura Ziskin, one of SU2C's founding members and the executive producer of the Sept. 2008 broadcast, who is also a cancer survivor. "Cancer claims 1,500 lives every single day in this country, and by 2010 it will become the leading cause of death worldwide, so the need for more and better treatments has never been more urgent. We set out to engage people all over the United States in supporting the scientists who are working to end this disease ... We're grateful to everyone — from the person who contributes one dollar through our website, to the philanthropists and companies who've made multimillion dollar gifts — who is standing up with us."

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## **Innovative Grant Funding Formula Departs from Traditional Approach**

Stand Up To Cancer's funding model for the Innovative Grants was designed specifically to support work that utilizes new ideas and new approaches to solve critical problems in cancer research. These innovative projects are characterized as "high-risk" because they challenge existing paradigms, and because in order to receive a grant the applicants were not required, as they would be by most conventional funding mechanisms, to have already conducted a portion of the research resulting in an established base of evidence. If successful, the projects have the potential for "high-reward" in terms of saving lives.

The American Association for Cancer Research, Stand Up To Cancer's scientific partner, assembled the expert SU2C Scientific Advisory Committee as well as the Innovative Research Grants Review Committee, who administered the scientific review process and will provide ongoing scientific oversight of the grants.

"Traditionally, the projects most likely to be funded are those with a demonstrable expectation of success, which means that some of the research has to be done before an investigator can submit a proposal," explained Kolodner, who is also a member of Stand Up To Cancer's Scientific Advisory Committee. "There are not many opportunities to receive funding for cancer research where young scientists are freed from the requirement of having 'proof of concept' data in order to receive grants, and certainly not such large grants."

**13 Stand Up To Cancer Innovative Grant Recipients**The projects funded all represent new approaches to the most important and challenging problems facing cancer researchers today. They address a wide range of cancer types and organ sites, including lung, ovarian and breast cancers, as well as leukemia and lymphomas. Some projects focus on developing improved therapies for difficult to treat cancers that affect children and young adults, including Ewing sarcoma and rhabdoid tumors. All the projects have the potential to significantly advance the identification of the complex mechanisms that cause cancers to occur and spread; to lead to the development of a new generation of targeted treatments; and to improve the methods of diagnosing cancers and monitoring the effects of treatment.

The 13 Stand Up To Cancer Innovative Research Grant recipients for 2009 are:

**Fernando D. Camargo, Ph.D.**, Children's Hospital Boston: An Emerging Tumor Suppressor Pathway in Human Cancer

**Elizabeth R. Lawlor, M.D., Ph.D.**, Children's Hospital Los Angeles: Modeling Ewing Tumor Initiation in Human Neural Crest Stem Cells

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**Matthew Levy, Ph.D.**, Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University: Cancer Cell Specific, Self-delivering Pro-drugs

**Markus Müschen, M.D.**, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles: Targeted Inhibition of BCL6 for Leukemia Stem Cell Eradication

**William Pao, M.D., Ph.D.**, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center/Vanderbilt University: Identifying Solid Tumor Kinase Fusions via Exon Capture and 454 Sequencing

**Charles M. Roberts, M.D., Ph.D.**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: Therapeutically Targeting the Epigenome in Aggressive Pediatric Cancers

**Rajat Rohatgi, M.D., Ph.D.**, Stanford University: Endogenous Small Molecules that Regulate Signaling Pathways in Cancer Cells

**José M. Silva, Ph.D.**, Columbia University Medical Center: Genetic Approaches for Next Generation of Breast Cancer Tailored Therapies

**Kimberly Stegmaier, M.D.**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: Modulating Transcription Factor Abnormalities in Pediatric Cancer

**Muneesh Tewari, M.D., Ph.D.**, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center: Noninvasive Molecular Profiling of Cancer via Tumor-derived Microparticles

**Loren D. Walensky, M.D., Ph.D.**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: A Transformative Technology to Capture and Drug New Cancer Targets

**David M. Weinstock, M.D.**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: Functional Oncogene Identification

**Hang Yin, Ph.D.**, University of Colorado at Boulder: Probing EBV-LMP-1's Transmembrane Activation Domain with Synthetic Peptide

### **Distinctive Review and Selection Process**

The grant selection process began in late 2008 with a call for Letters of Intent from young researchers in the early stages of their careers. The 45-member Innovative Research Grants Review Committee considered 412 eligible letters in an intense, multi-step evaluation process that began in May, 2009. Based on the initial review of each proposal by three committee members, the group was narrowed to 73 semi-finalists who were invited to submit full research proposals, which were then reviewed late this past summer. The list was narrowed again, to 19 finalists who made in-person presentations to the Grants Review Committee during an intensive two-day meeting in early October. From that group, the committee selected the 13 recipients.

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The committee evaluated the submissions using these criteria: potential for high-risk/high-reward; innovation in method or approach; potential for significant translation to clinical application; promise to improve and save the lives of cancer patients; and potential to develop into a Dream Team project.

“The review process was unusually interactive; it’s very rare in cancer research funding for young investigators to present their proposals to a group of senior scientists in face-to-face meetings,” said Scientific Advisory Committee Member and Innovative Research Grants Review Committee Vice-Chairperson William G. Nelson, V., M.D., Ph.D., professor of oncology and director, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University. “The seasoned scientists on the committee provided direct feedback to the finalists on their projects, which the grant recipients can integrate as they begin to undertake their research.”

### **Grants are Living Legacy to Research Pioneer Judah Folkman**

The Innovative Research Grants program was established in honor of the late Judah Folkman, M.D., to recognize him as one of the great innovators in cancer research, an outstanding teacher of young investigators and an early contributor to the SU2C project. Folkman’s pioneering work led to a new understanding of angiogenesis in cancer and the development of important new treatments based on his discoveries.

“At our very first meeting, as we were just beginning to formulate the plans for Stand Up To Cancer, Dr. Folkman spoke passionately about the need to fund young investigators. They say that science always stands on the shoulders of the giants that come before, and we lost a true giant when Dr. Folkman died just six weeks later. It’s fitting to honor him by funding the next generation of potential research stars. Their work will be an important tribute to his legacy and his dream of defeating cancer,” said Sherry Lansing, a SU2C founding member and board chair of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, the underlying 501(c)(3) charitable organization that serves as the initiative’s fiduciary.

### **Funded Projects Address Wide Range of Challenges**

Margaret Foti, Ph.D, M.D. (h.c.), chief executive officer of the American Association for Cancer Research, said she was very excited by the scientific excellence and the scope of the research projects selected by the committee.

“The Innovative Grant recipients are thinking broadly and creatively, with one end goal in mind: making scientific progress to save lives from cancer,” Foti noted. “We are at a very important juncture in cancer research; its pace is increasingly rapid, and that enhances the speed at which we can move new discoveries out of the lab and into the

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clinic. Support for the next generation of remarkable young scientists is critical to ensuring that we continue to accelerate that pace. The AACR is proud of its partnership with Stand Up To Cancer and the contribution this important initiative is making to advancing cancer research.”

### **Collaboration and Transparency in the SU2C Funding Model**

Fostering increased collaboration among cancer researchers at different institutions is a key SU2C goal. Planning is underway for both formal and informal communication and meetings among all the SU2C-funded scientists to share ideas and progress. It is expected that these interactions between the Innovative Research Grant recipients and Dream Team members will lead to new synergies and potential collaborations.

The AACR, through the SU2C Scientific Advisory Committee and Innovative Research Grants Review Committee will conduct regular reviews to ensure accountability and that objectives are being satisfactorily achieved. Stand Up To Cancer is committed to transparency in both the funding process, and the outcomes of the projects. Progress reports will be made available to the public at: [www.su2c.org](http://www.su2c.org) and [www.aacr.org](http://www.aacr.org)

### **The SU2C Movement’s Online Community**

SU2C’s robust online community ( [www.su2c.org](http://www.su2c.org) ) offers various ways for people to share opinions and support, view video updates, contribute, and learn of ongoing initiatives and progress in the fight against cancer. The scope of donation opportunities on the SU2C website ranges from naming a star in honor of a loved one to web team challenges that encourage collaborative fundraising efforts by groups of various sizes all over the country. The online community provides ample opportunity to share SU2C’s efforts via a variety of social media outlets, including Twitter, Facebook, AOL, MySpace, YouTube, flickr, and several other sites that are accessible through the SU2C website. SU2C is implementing ongoing grassroots efforts, and is participating in national and regional events to raise awareness and funds.

For additional information on Stand Up To Cancer, visit [www.su2c.org](http://www.su2c.org) # # #

**About the Stand Up To Cancer Initiative** Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) raises funds to hasten the pace of groundbreaking translational research that can get new therapies to patients quickly and save lives. In the fall of 2007, a group of women whose lives have

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all been affected by cancer in profound ways began working together to marshal the resources of the media and entertainment industries in the fight against this disease. The SU2C founding members include Laura Ziskin, executive producer of the Sept. 5, 2008 broadcast, who is a cancer survivor; Sherry Lansing, chairperson of the Entertainment Industry Foundation's Board of Directors and founder of the Sherry Lansing Foundation; EIF President and CEO Lisa Paulsen; Katie Couric; Noreen Fraser, founder of the Noreen Fraser Foundation (NFF) and a cancer survivor; EIF Vice President Kathleen Lobb; Rusty Robertson and Sue Schwartz of the Robertson Schwartz Agency; and nonprofit executive Ellen Ziffren. SU2C was formally launched on May 27, 2008, and Diane Balma serves as its executive director.

Major League Baseball was the lead donor to contribute to Stand Up To Cancer, and Sidney Kimmel, the country's largest individual supporter of cancer research, pledged \$25 million during last year's telecast. Other major SU2C supporters include Amgen, AARP, Bloomberg Philanthropies, GlaxoSmithKline, Revlon, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Wallis Annenberg & The Annenberg Foundation, Alliance for Global Good, Milken Family Foundation, Philips Electronics, Steve Tisch, The Island Def Jam Music Group and many others. In addition to ABC, CBS and NBC, SU2C major media partners include AOL, Condé Nast Media Group, eBay Inc., Facebook, Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S., Hearst Corporation, Los Angeles Times, Meredith Corporation, The New York Times Company, Time Inc, and WebMD.

**About the AACR** The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), which consists of over 30,000 scientists engaged in the fight against cancer, is the oldest and largest scientific organization in the world focusing on every aspect of high-quality, innovative cancer research from the bench to the bedside. Lauded internationally for its scientific breadth, innovation and spread of new knowledge about cancer, the AACR is on the front lines in the quest for the prevention and cure of cancer. The AACR holds meetings on critical cancer research topics around the world and publishes six major cancer research journals.

As Stand Up To Cancer's scientific partner, the AACR is responsible for administering the grants, and — in conjunction with the SU2C Scientific Advisory Committee, led by Nobel Laureate Phillip A. Sharp, Ph.D., Institute Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and David H. Koch Institute at MIT — providing scientific oversight.

### **About the Entertainment Industry Foundation**

Stand Up To Cancer is a program of the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF), the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that serves as the collective philanthropy for the television and film businesses. EIF has distributed hundreds of millions of dollars to support programs addressing critical health, education and social issues.

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**Stand Up To Cancer and Innovative Grant B-Roll - Satellite Feed** Available

Monday, December 7

7:30 AM – 7:45 AM ET/2:30 PM – 2:45 PM ET/Galaxy 3C Transponder 8C

Downlink Frequency: 3860 MHz (V)

**Video & Widget Available** A 4 minute video and 2 minute widget of the 2009 Stand Up To Cancer Innovative Grant Recipients with questions by Stand Up To Cancer ambassadors Rob Lowe, Minka Kelly, Robyn Tunney, Sofia Vassilieva Diane Kruger and Rashida Jones are both available online.

Video: <http://www.standup2cancer.org/sutv?sid=0&vid=3847> Widget:

[http://seed.sproutbuilder.com/nAAwoa\\_bHBw4nS\\_b](http://seed.sproutbuilder.com/nAAwoa_bHBw4nS_b)

