A Statement From NCCN in Support of a Moonshot to Cure Cancer

NCCN applauds and supports the urgency of President Obama and Vice President Biden's Moonshot Initiative to Cure Cancer throughout the world, announced during the State of the Union Address on January 12 and outlined in a statement from the Vice President (https://medium.com/@VPOTUS/inspiring-a-new-generation-to-defy-the-bounds-of-innovation-a-moonshot-to-cure-cancer-fbd71d01c2e#.8h76phhnm).

“Vice President Biden’s call to leading cancer centers to break down silos and reach unprecedented levels of cooperation to enhance the effectiveness of cancer treatment, and for the oncology community to improve communication so that the care provided to patients at the world’s best cancer centers is available to everyone who needs it, echoes the work and mission of NCCN and our Member Institutions,” said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. “NCCN stands with President Obama, Vice President Biden, and their Administration on this crucial initiative, and we look forward to working to advance the goals of the initiative. It is time that people stop dying of cancer.”

As an alliance of 26 of the nation’s leading cancer centers, NCCN’s mission is to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of cancer care so that patients can live better lives, and we do so by providing state-of-the-art cancer treatment information to cancer fighters throughout the world in both academic and community settings.

NCCN’s expert panel members volunteer more than 26,000 hours per year to develop and continuously update clinical treatment guidelines that document evidence-based, consensus-driven management to ensure that cancer patients, receive preventive, diagnostic, treatment, and supportive services that lead to optimal outcomes. The NCCN Guidelines assist in the decision-making process of individuals involved in cancer care—including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, payers, and patients and their families—with the goal of advancing patient care in the fight against cancer. In 2015, nearly 6.5 million copies the NCCN Guidelines were downloaded or distributed in the United States and across the globe.

“As a treating physician of patients with cancer, personally as a cancer patient, and as a son whose parents both died of cancer, this is something I confront and think about every day. I applaud Vice President Biden’s Moonshot Initiative to Cure Cancer. His vision of breaking down silos, funding cancer researchers, enhancing the care provided by community physicians, stimulating discovery by the pharmaceutical industry, and bringing the cancer community together will be of tremendous help,” said Samuel M. Silver, MD, PhD, Assistant Dean for Research and Professor of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Chair, NCCN Board of Directors. “However, we must realize that even though we are on the cusp of many important breakthroughs, cancer is a difficult disease caused by many different mechanisms, and it will require funding of everything from basic research to translational research, to important and well-thought-out trials, to the delivery of cancer care to our patients in order to make this initiative successful.”

“Every cancer patient with an incurable disease feels hope that a discovery will save them, but hears the loudly ticking clock as times runs out. Vice President Biden is demanding that exciting discoveries—within reach today—be treated with the urgency they deserve. What better way to honor Beau Biden’s memory than to create opportunities that translate the research into successful treatment before time runs out,” said Terry S. Langbaum, MAS, Chief Administrative Officer, The Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, and Member, NCCN Board of Directors.
NCCN Awards Research Grants to Five Investigators to Study Effectiveness of Enzalutamide in Various Cancers

The NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP) has awarded 5 grants to investigators to evaluate and define the preclinical and clinical effectiveness of enzalutamide in mantle cell lymphoma and endometrial, hepatocellular, and prostate cancers. These grants are made possible through funding from Astellas Pharma, Inc. and Medivation, Inc.

“These 5 studies selected through peer review represent an excellent mix of both clinical and preclinical projects, which will further elucidate the activity and utility of this important therapeutic agent,” said Robert C. Young, MD, Interim Vice President, NCCN ORP.

The following proposals have been awarded funding:

- Albert Chang, MD, PhD, UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, “Phase II Trial of Dose Escalated Radiotherapy With Leuprolide and Enzalutamide in Patients With Very High Risk or Pelvic Node Positive Prostate Cancer”
- Ajay Gopal, MD, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center/Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, “Androgen Receptor Targeting in Mantle Cell Lymphoma: A Pilot Phase II Trial of Enzalutamide”
- James Harding, MD, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, “A Multi-Center Phase I/II Study of Enzalutamide With and Without Sorafenib in Advanced Hepatocellular Carcinoma Patients”
- Gustavo Leone, PhD, The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute, “Evaluating the Efficacy of Enzalutamide Therapy in Preventing Tumor Progression in a Preclinical Mouse Model of Type 1 Endometrial Carcinoma”
- Shannon Westin, MD, MPH, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, “A Phase II Study With a Limited Safety Lead-In of Enzalutamide in Combination With Carboplatin and Paclitaxel in Advanced Stage or Recurrent Endometrial Cancer”

The awardees responded to a Request for Proposals issued by the NCCN ORP to the 26 NCCN Member Institutions. Submissions were peer reviewed by the NCCN Enzalutamide Scientific Review Committee. The funded concepts were selected based on several criteria, including scientific merit, existing data, and the types of studies necessary to further evaluate the efficacy of enzalutamide.

The NCCN ORP draws on the expertise of the investigators of the NCCN Member Institutions and NCCN Affiliate Research Consortium (ARC) to facilitate all phases of clinical research. This research is made possible by collaborations with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in order to advance therapeutic options for patients with cancer.

For more information about the NCCN ORP, visit NCCN.org/ORP.

NCCN Awards Grants to Three Researchers to Investigate Volasertib in Hematologic Malignancies

The NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP) has awarded 3 grants to investigators from NCCN Member Institutions to scientifically evaluate and define the safety and clinical effectiveness of the investigational compound volasertib in the treatment of hematologic malignancies. These grants are made possible through funding from Boehringer Ingelheim, Inc.

“This award allows researchers from 3 NCCN Member Institutions to focus on clinical evaluation of this novel Polo-like kinase inhibitor,” said Robert C. Young, MD,
Interim Vice President, NCCN ORP. “We are grateful for our ongoing collaboration with Boehringer Ingelheim to advance clinical research and improve the lives of people with cancer.”

The following proposals have been awarded funding:

- Anne Beaven, MD, Duke Cancer Institute, “Phase I Trial of Volasertib Plus Romidepsin in Patients With Relapsed/Refractory Peripheral T-Cell and Cutaneous T-Cell Lymphoma”
- Shira Dinner, MD, Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, “A Phase I Clinical Trial Evaluating the Combination of Volasertib (BI-6727) With Vincristine Sulfate Liposomal Injections (VSLI) in Adult Patients With Relapsed/Refractory Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia”
- Steven Gore, MD, Yale Cancer Center/Smilow Cancer Hospital, “Phase I Study of Volasertib and Belinostat in Patients With Relapsed and Refractory Aggressive B-Cell and T-Cell Lymphomas”

Volasertib is an investigational compound that inhibits enzymes called Polo-like kinase (PLK). PLK1 is the best characterized kinase of the PLK family. PLK1 regulates cell division (mitosis). This inhibition can result in prolonged cell cycle arrest, ultimately leading to cell death (apoptosis). Volasertib is currently being evaluated in clinical trials for various solid tumors and hematologic malignancies.

The awardees responded to a Request for Proposals issued by the NCCN ORP to the 26 NCCN Member Institutions. Submissions were peer reviewed by the NCCN Volasertib Scientific Review Committee. The funded concepts were selected based on several criteria, including scientific merit, existing data, and the types of studies necessary to further evaluate the safety and efficacy of volasertib.

The NCCN ORP draws on the expertise of the investigators of NCCN Member Institutions and NCCN Affiliate Research Consortium (ARC) to facilitate all phases of clinical research. This research is made possible by collaborations with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in order to advance therapeutic options for patients with cancer.

For more information about the NCCN ORP, visit NCCN.org/ORP.

Reference


NCCN Awarded $2 Million in Research Funding From Peregrine Pharmaceuticals to Study Bavituximab in Various Cancers

The NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP) has been awarded a $2-million grant from Peregrine Pharmaceuticals, Inc. to study bavituximab, a first-in-class treatment approach for various cancers.

“NCCN is very pleased to collaborate with Peregrine Pharmaceuticals on their first-in-class novel targeted monoclonal antibody, bavituximab,” said Robert C. Young, MD, Interim Vice President, NCCN ORP. “We look forward to a productive interaction in both clinical and preclinical studies undertaken at the NCCN Member Institutions.”

“This collaboration with NCCN will allow us to significantly expand our clinical evaluation of bavituximab and augment Peregrine’s internal investigator sponsored trial (IST) program,” said Steven W. King, President and Chief Executive Officer, Peregrine. “Importantly, NCCN shares our strong research interest in evaluating unique

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bavituximab combination therapies for the treatment of cancer, and the group’s oversight of the program will allow for the conducting of many more studies than would have been otherwise possible.”

Bavituximab is an investigational immunotherapy designed to assist the body’s immune system by targeting and modulating the activity of phosphatidylserine (PS), a highly immune-suppressive signaling molecule expressed broadly on the surface of cells in the tumor microenvironment. Peregrine’s PS-targeted inhibitor, bavituximab, is thought to reverse the immunosuppressive environment that many tumors establish in order to proliferate and spread, while also fighting cancer by activating immune cells that target and fight cancer. According to Peregrine, a broad set of preclinical and translational data has been assembled that supports the ability of bavituximab to improve the therapeutic activity of a range of cancer treatments, from traditional approaches, such as chemotherapy and radiation, to novel immuno-oncology agents such as checkpoint inhibitors.

The first phase of the program will involve the establishment of an NCCN Bavituximab Request for Proposals Development Team to evaluate existing data and to discuss and define the data and types of studies necessary to further characterize the safety and clinical effectiveness of bavituximab.

The NCCN ORP draws on the expertise of the investigators of the NCCN Member Institutions and NCCN Affiliate Research Consortium (ARC) to facilitate all phases of clinical research. This research is made possible by collaborations with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in order to advance therapeutic options for patients with cancer.

The NCCN ORP will use the grant from Peregrine Pharmaceuticals to support investigator-initiated clinical and correlative studies at NCCN Member Institutions and their affiliate community hospitals for bavituximab. To date, this successful research model has received approximately $58 million in research grants and supported more than 132 studies that have produced a number of publications in peer-reviewed journals.

To learn more about the NCCN ORP and ongoing clinical trials, visit NCCN.org/ORP.

Reference