

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network furthers research investment through funding of scientific grants

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The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN), dedicated to fighting the world's toughest cancer has announced the recipients of its 2019 research grants. Through a highly competitive peer-review process, seven researchers across the U.S. were selected, bringing PanCAN's total projected research investment to approximately \$104 million, including its grants program and clinical and scientific initiatives.

"Pancreatic cancer is a public health crisis, with diagnoses on the rise," said Julie Fleshman, JD, MBA, president and CEO of PanCAN. "Through our donor-funded grants program, we are proud to support science focused on developing new and better treatments and early detection tools – without the generosity of donors, we simply would not be able to fund this vital research."

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The following researchers are recipients of 2019 PanCAN grants:

Yuan Chen, PhD, Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope

Eric Collisson, MD, University of California, San Francisco Nicholas Cosford, PhD, Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute

Dannielle Engle, PhD, Salk Institute for Biological Studies, funded in memory of Skip Viragh

Ingunn Stromnes, PhD, University of Minnesota, funded by Nancy Stagliano in memory of Julia Stagliano

Wantong Yao, MD, PhD, MD Anderson Cancer Center

Xiaochun Yu, MD, PhD, Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope

This year's recipients include four first-time PanCAN grantees and two new institutions. Two of the grants awarded support projects led by early-career researchers, helping them further establish their careers and secure funding from other sources

in the future. The early-career investigators are focused on improving the effectiveness of immunotherapy and uncovering novel ways to treat the disease.

Four grantees received translational grants, which support projects aiming to take important discoveries from the laboratory to the clinic for patient benefit. The recipients of translational grants all aim to treat the disease through innovative approaches that include starving the cancer cells of nutrients, blocking critical cellular signaling pathways and inhibiting the cancer cells' ability to repair DNA damage.

Finally, PanCAN and its scientific reviewers have awarded five grant extensions to previously funded researchers with projects that are already in progress. Extension recipients include:

Gregory Beatty, MD, PhD, University of Pennsylvania, funded in memory of Skip Viragh

Michael Curran, PhD, MD Anderson Cancer Center

Sunil R. Hingorani, MD, PhD, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, funded by 1440 Foundation

Kenneth Shroyer, MD, PhD, Stony Brook University

Kenneth Zaret, PhD, University of Pennsylvania

"Donor-funded grants allow pancreatic cancer researchers to pursue work that can make a major difference in our understanding of the disease and, most importantly, in patients' lives," said Lynn Matrisian, PhD, MBA, chief science officer at PanCAN. "We are very excited about the projects and the dedicated research teams leading them. We look forward to watching how their work informs and advances the field."

This marks the 17th year of PanCAN's donor-funded grants program. To date, the program has awarded 173 grants to 170 scientists at 64 institutions for a total of \$47.2 million.

Support the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network's urgent goal to pancreatic cancer double survival.