

KOMEN CATALYST GRANT AWARDED TO PROVIDENCE CANCER CENTER FOR CELL STUDY

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PORTLAND, Ore. – Can we stop cancer in its tracks? Providence Cancer Center researcher Michael Gough, Ph.D., has received a Career Catalyst Research Grant from Susan G. Komen for the Cure to study the possibility of ending metastatic cancer.

Despite advances in all treatment modalities for breast cancer, metastatic disease – the spread of cancer to other parts of the body – remains the ultimate challenge. Dr. Gough’s work in the field of cancer research explores how the human immune system protects and supports cancer cell growth following cytotoxic therapies such as radiation and chemotherapy. Cells that are not killed during treatment have the potential to move to other parts of the body. The grant will be used to study how to redirect immune processes so that a patient’s own immune system can target and destroy residual cancer cells that remain following treatment. It will also explore ways to enhance the efficacy of chemotherapy and radiation therapy in order to eradicate microscopic pockets of disease and eliminate the chances of cancer cells spreading.#

Finding funding for studies such as this is increasingly challenging, according to Walter J. Urba, M.D., Ph.D., director of cancer research for the Robert W. Franz Cancer Research Center in the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute at Providence Cancer Center. With reduced funding from the National Institutes of Health, researchers are pressed to find other sources of support. Providence Cancer Center is the only Oregon institution to receive research funding from Komen in the organization’s 2011 fiscal year.

Komen Career Catalyst Research Grants are awarded to scientists in the early stages of their careers to further research independence and to explore novel approaches that will lead to substantial progress in breast cancer research and reductions in breast cancer incidence and/or mortality within the next decade. Dr. Gough’s team will receive \$450,000 over three years. Funds become available in June, 2011.

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Providence Cancer Center, a part of Providence Health & Services, offers the latest in cancer services, including diagnosis, treatment, prevention, education, support and internationally renowned research. In 2010, Providence Cancer Center was selected as a National Cancer Institute Community Cancer Center Program. Visit www.providence.org/cancer.