

University Cancer Research Fund (UCRF)

The Fund

- A nation-leading investment in research to reduce the burden of NC's number one cause of death.
- The Fund will improve future health through: **Discovery:** Better understanding the causes and course of cancer; **Innovation:** Using new knowledge to create new and better ways to prevent, find, and treat cancer; and **Delivery:** Improving cancer care, screening, and prevention across the state.
- Established in August 2007 by the State of North Carolina for cancer research at the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and NC Cancer Hospital.
- Funding: \$25M in 2007-2008; \$40M in 2008-2009; \$50M in 2009-2010 and thereafter. Funding sources: Tobacco Trust Fund, an increased tax on smokeless tobacco products, and general revenue.
- Builds on the state's \$180M investment to build the North Carolina Cancer Hospital.
- Governance: A seven-member Cancer Research Fund Committee chaired by UNC System **President Erskine Bowles** oversees the Fund. Other members include: **Dr. Edward Benz Jr.**, president and chief executive officer of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA ; and **Dr. John Mendelsohn**, president of the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas; **Dr. William Roper**, dean of the UNC School of Medicine and CEO of the UNC Health Care System; **Dr. Shelley Earp**, director of UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center; Dr. Barbara Rimer, dean of the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health; **Dr. Robert A. Blouin**, dean of the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy.

Initiatives, Strategic Planning, and Evaluation

- The Fund's 2008-2009 budget continues to accelerate progress in the Discovery, Innovation, and Delivery via seven research strategies:
 - Assess cancer in North Carolina and change outcomes;
 - Bring knowledge about the genetics of cancer to clinical settings;
 - Turn basic research into new drugs and other cancer therapies;
 - Monitor patients' early response to therapy and speed clinical trials;
 - Enhance clinical excellence and apply findings to offer world-class patient care across the state;
 - Launch nation-leading research on cancer survivorship; and
 - Invest in leading-edge researchers and innovative research ideas.
- Under the guidance of the Cancer Research Fund Committee, AltshulerGray LLC has led a strategic planning process to identify areas where UNC and North Carolina can become world leaders in cancer research. A final strategic plan is expected in June 2009.
- SRA International (formerly Constella Group LLC) is conducting an independent evaluation of the Fund. A report on the Fund's first year is expected in July 2009.

Progress - Year One and Two

- *Jeanne Hopkins Lucas Study.* The Fund has launched this multi-faceted, population-based effort to understand disparities in breast cancer outcomes among African American women in North Carolina.
- *Recruitment:* The Fund has helped bring more than 30 new faculty researchers to UNC and is helping support more than 425 faculty, staff, and students.
- *Retention.* The Fund has helped UNC keep faculty, including Tar Heel of the Year, Dr. Joe DeSimone from accepting offers at other institutions.
- *Carolina Well / Cancer Survivorship Study.* UNC is in the pilot phase of a comprehensive data and informatics resource that includes 10,000 newly diagnosed cancer patients and links data on their treatment, biology/genetics, psychosocial/quality of life, and long-term follow-up and outcome. This type of data resource is the foundation for future multidisciplinary research that advances personalized medical care.

- *Collaborative Cross.* With support from the Fund, UNC is now the home of the collaborative cross, a unique resource that provides an unparalleled opportunity to develop mouse models of cancer and other human disease. These models can speed identification of new opportunities for drug treatment, early detection, and prevention.
- *Mouse Preclinical Trails - Phase I Unit.* Based upon the pioneering work of Nobel Laureate Oliver Smithies, this new resource will accelerate the movement of new drugs from the laboratory to the clinic by early testing in sophisticated animal models that can identify compounds more likely to work in humans.
- *Drug Discovery and Development.* Recruitment of Dr. Steven Frye, the former director of GSK's worldwide medicinal chemistry operation, is allowing the Cancer Center and the School of Pharmacy to create an innovative approach to cancer therapy development. This program is the founding of only the second GLP pharmaco-analytic facility at a university cancer center (the other is at MD Anderson).

Development of Clinical Research and Expertise

- *Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant.* Recruitment of Kim Kasnow from St. Jude's to lead our Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Program.
- *Adult Bone Marrow Transplant.* Enhancement of our research capacity through recruitment of two clinician scientists from Harvard and MD Anderson.
- *Radiation Oncology.* Expansion of the program and its capabilities by the recruitment of a new chairman and three clinician scientists. One from the University of Florida and two from Harvard, one of whom has a focus on prostate cancer and the other nanotechnology.
- *Geriatric Oncology.* Development of a new specialty with recruitment of a nationally recognized leader.
- *GYN Oncology.* Recruitment of a GYN oncologist to lead the Women's Research Center. She has an emphasis on minority disparities in breast and ovarian cancers.
- *Surgical and Medical Oncology.* Expansion of our capabilities in hematologic malignancies, breast cancer, melanoma by recruitment of six new oncologists.
- *Comprehensive Cancer Support Program.* We have recruited the clinical head of psychiatry from the NIH's hospital in Bethesda. He will develop a psycho-oncology and comprehensive support program. This program will be extended through our state outreach network.

Clinical and Public Health Outreach: Improving Cancer Outcomes in North Carolina

- *Outreach.* Through videoconferencing, telemedicine, patient navigators, and formal collaborations, the Fund is building the UNC Cancer Network to link cancer physicians across the state with advice and expertise at UNC. The Fund is also establishing NC SPEED sites and programs across the state to promote prevention and wellness including colon cancer screening and tobacco cessation for pregnant women. The Fund has established a formal research partnership with East Carolina University to promote basic, translational, and clinical cancer research. The Fund has also instituted an innovative research collaboration with the NC School of Veterinary Medicine and is preparing to work with investigators at UNC system institutions.

Competitiveness for National Funding

- *Leverage.* UCRF support helped UNC receive a National Institute of Health Clinical Translational Science Award, a mark of research distinction and an additional ~\$35M in extramural grant funding over five years. The UCRF Innovation Awards, an internal competitive seed grants program, is beginning to generate new grant applications, as well as published research.
- *Continued Leverage.* The UCRF has primed UNC to benefit from federal fund initiatives. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has increased the National Institutes of Health budget by ~\$8B to create jobs through extramural research programs. The President's 2010 budget proposes a significant increase in the National Cancer Institute's budget and a doubling of the Institute's budget over the next ten years.