



Congratulations to Awardees of the 2024 Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre Catalyst Translational Cancer Research Grant Competition

The Catalyst Grants for Cancer Research Review Panel recently recommended funding for eleven research projects submitted to the 2024 Competition. This program supports translational cancer research with potential to attract external funding and to lead to clinical applications that reduce the burden of cancer. We gratefully acknowledge our community fundraisers, generous donors and the diligent efforts of the London Health Sciences Foundation for the support required to offer these Catalyst Grants to our cancer researchers.

The Review Panel has approved funding for the following awards. Please join us in congratulating the successful applicants:

Dr. Alison Allan (Depts. of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Oncology)

Co-Applicant: Dr. Vasu Bhat (Cancer Research Laboratory Program, VFCC)

Elucidating the Role of Phosphoproteome Dynamics in Regulating Stemness and Metastatic Behavior of Breast Cancer Cells

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Breast Cancer Canada Translational Breast Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Eva Turley (Depts. of Biochemistry, Oncology, Surgery)

Co-Applicant: Dr. Len Luyt (Depts. of Chemistry, Oncology), **Dr. Eugene Wong**

(Depts. of Astronomy & Physics, Oncology), **Dr. Sarah Mattonen** (Depts. of Medical Biophysics, Oncology)

Targeting RHAMM to blunt radiotherapy-induced lung toxicity

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Ricardo Fernandes (Dept. of Oncology).

Co-Applicant: Dr. Saman Maleki (Depts. of Pathology & Lab Medicine, Oncology)

Association between androgen receptor pathway inhibitors and gastrointestinal microbiota in patients with prostate cancer (INTEGUT)

Amount Funded: \$22,500 (Translational Prostate Cancer Research focus)

Dr. Jim Petrik (Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Guelph; Western Dept of Oncology).

Co-Applicants: Dr. Trevor Shepherd (Depts. of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Ob/Gyn, Oncology), **Dr. Leslie Ogilvie** (Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Guelph)

Fc3TSR as a novel therapeutic in Advanced Stage Ovarian Cancer

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Ovarian Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Matthew Cecchini (Depts. of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Oncology)

Co-Applicants: Dr. Rohann Correa (Dept. of Oncology), **Dr. Jason Wasserman** (Dept. of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine), **Dr. Brian Keller** (Dept. of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine)

Leveraging AI to Improve Patient Understanding of Prostate Cancer Pathology Through Customized Large Language Model

Amount Funded: \$22,500 (Translational Prostate Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Pencilla Lang (Dept. of, Oncology).

Co-PIs: Dr. Sarah Mattonen (Depts. of Medical Biophysics, Oncology), **Dr. Doug Hoover** (Dept. of Oncology)

Co-Applicants: Dr. Danielle MacNeil (Dept. of Otolaryngology, Oncology), **Dr. Matt Cecchini** (Depts. of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Oncology), **Edward Wang** (MD/Ph.D. student Dept. of Medical Biophysics)

A Feasibility Study on Integrating Real-Time 3D Scanning of Surgical Specimens into Adjuvant Radiation Therapy Planning for Oral Cavity Cancer

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Chris Pin (Depts. of Physiology & Pharmacology, Pediatrics, Oncology)

Defining interplay between cancer and non-cancer cells using patient-derived organoids

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Baker Centre Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Armen Parysan (Depts. of Surgery, Anatomy & Cell Biology, Oncology)

Co-Applicants: Dr. Alison Allan (Depts. of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Oncology)

Dr. Vasu Bhat (Cancer Research Laboratory Program, VFCC)

Artemis as a novel target to enhance radiosensitivity in triple-negative breast cancer

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Breast Cancer Canada Translational Breast Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Trevor Shepherd (Depts. of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Ob/Gyn, Oncology)

Co-Applicants: Jack Webb (Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology)

ULK1-mediated regulation of mitochondrial dynamics in ovarian cancer spheroids

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Ovarian Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Teklab Gebregiworgis (Depts. of Biochemistry, Oncology)
Characterizing Metabolic Phenotype of Pancreatic Cancer-Associated Fibroblasts
Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Baker Centre Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Grant)

Dr. Nathalie Berube (Depts. of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Pediatrics, Oncology).
Co-Applicant: Kasha Mansour, PhD candidate (Dept. of Anatomy & Cell Biology)
Oligodendrocyte precursors as cells of origin in astrocytomas
Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant, Undesignated)

We graciously acknowledge the generous support of Mr. Keith Samitt, Breast Cancer Canada, The London Run for Ovarian Cancer, The Baker Centre for Pancreatic Cancer, and our other generous supporters of cancer research in London and the greater Southwestern Ontario region.

We also thank the members of the peer-review committee for their time, effort and diligence in conducting the reviews, which is essential for ensuring that these funds support the highest quality translational cancer research: **Dr. Joe Mymryk (Chair of the Review Panel), Dr. Steve Gameiro (Scientific Officer) and the reviewers: Drs. Parisa Shooshtari, Glenn Bauman, Stephen Welch, Eric Winqvist, John Ronald, John DeGuglielmo, Stewart Gaede, Brant Inman, and Len Luyt.**

We are grateful to Gail McConnell (Cancer Research Laboratory Program, VFCC) for providing essential administrative support!

Congratulations and well done!

Joe Mymryk Ph.D., Chair-2024 Catalyst Grant Review Panel
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