Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Diane M. Simeone, MD, to discuss Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Consortium: PRECEDE

The Hirshberg Foundation is thrilled to announce Diane M. Simeone, MD will be joining us at the 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss the significance and importance of the Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Consortium: PRECEDE.

Early detection has the potential to dramatically change the trajectory of pancreatic cancer. The Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection (PRECEDE) Consortium is an international, multi-institutional collaborative group of experts working to increase survival for pancreatic cancer patients by improving early detection, screening, risk modeling and prevention for those with a heritable risk for pancreatic cancer, through a novel model of collaboration and data sharing. Dr. Simeone will discuss the current state of clinical surveillance for pancreatic cancer in high-risk individuals, and the role of large-scale collaborative research to accelerate progress toward meaningful improvement in survival.

Dr. Diane Simeone assumes the role of Director at Moores Comprehensive Cancer Center at University of California San Diego Health, effective April 1, 2024. As director, she will spearhead the National Cancer Institute (NCI)-sponsored Cancer Center Support Grant as the principal investigator, while providing strategic intellectual guidance for the center’s research programs, administrative structure and

multidisciplinary clinical service line. Under her leadership, MCC will have a significant impact on cancer treatment, detection, and prevention in the coming era. Previously, the Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Professor of Surgery and Pathology at New York University, Dr. Simeone was Director of the Pancreatic Cancer Center, concurrently as the Associate Director for Translational Research. She is an internationally renowned pancreatic surgeon and a researcher with a long-standing career focus on the treatment of pancreatic neoplasms. With a remarkable record of accomplishment of continuous NIH funding spanning 25 years, investigating the molecular mechanisms driving pancreatic metastasis and the development of novel, more effective therapeutic strategies to treat pancreatic cancer patients. She has a large clinical practice taking care of patients with pancreatic neoplasms and those at elevated risk of the disease. She first discovered pancreatic cancer stem cells, identified ATDC as a novel oncogene in human cancers, and defined for the first-time unique populations of cancer associated fibroblasts in pancreatic cancer. She has been an innovator in the development of therapeutic clinical trials for pancreatic cancer, and is the Principal Investigator of Precision Promise, a national adaptive phase 2/3 platform clinical trial consortium focused on next-generation clinical trials for patients with pancreatic cancer. Dr. Simeone established and leads the Precede Consortium, an international collaboration of 50 centers dedicated to studying a large longitudinal cohort of individuals at heritable risk for pancreatic cancer. Her leadership extends beyond the laboratory, she is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research and has chaired the scientific and medical advisory board of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, served as president of the Society of University Surgeons, the American Pancreatic Association, and National Cancer Institute’s Pancreatic Cancer

Task Force. Recognized for her contributions, Dr. Simeone is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, setting her position as a leader in cancer research and clinical practice.

A critical piece of the early detection puzzle, we are excited to have Diane M. Simeone MD present **Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Consortium: PRECEDE** at the 18th Annual Symposium.

Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Eileen O’Reilly, MD to discuss Pancreatic Cancer Progress Report 2024

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce Eileen O’Reilly, MD will be joining us at the 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to share up-to-date information in a Pancreatic Cancer Progress Report 2024.

Dr. O’Reilly will review current state of the art treatments for pancreas cancer as well as the genetics of this disease. She will also discuss emerging targets, immunotherapy and vaccine approaches that are in development.

Eileen M. O’Reilly holds the Winthrop Rockefeller Endowed Chair in Medical Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK). She serves as the Section Head for Hepatopancreaticobiliary/ Neuroendocrine Cancers, Gastrointestinal Oncology Service, Co-Director for Medical Initiatives at the David M. Rubenstein

Center for Pancreatic Cancer and is an attending physician and member at MSK and Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.

Dr. O'Reilly received her medical degree at Trinity College in Ireland. She completed her postgraduate training in Ireland and subsequent Hematology/Oncology Fellowship training at MSK. Dr. O'Reilly is a clinical scientist whose research focus involves integration of molecular and genetic-based therapies for pancreas cancer along with development of adjuvant and neoadjuvant treatments and identification of biomarkers for therapy selection. Dr. O'Reilly teaches and mentors junior faculty, oncology fellows, residents and medical/other students and has received numerous teaching and other awards. Dr. O'Reilly is the Principal Investigator of multiple phase I, II, III trials in pancreas cancer and has authored/co-authored over 375 articles, editorials, and book chapters and has an H-index of 89. She serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Clinical Oncology and Senior Editor for several other journals and has served on multiple grant review panels including, for the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), American Association of Cancer Research (AACR), NIH, DOD, and various international entities. She is the PI of the MSK Pancreas Specialized Program in Oncology Research Excellence (SPORE), an NCI funded team science grant. Dr. O'Reilly is the recipient of numerous awards including the Burkitt Medal (TCD) in 2022, and Giants of Cancer Care GI Oncology, 2023.

Dr. O'Reilly's other responsibilities include Chair of the Human Research Protection Program and Institutional Review & Privacy Board (IRB). Nationally, Dr. O'Reilly is Co-Chair of the NCI Alliance Co-Operative Group Gastrointestinal Cancers Committee and serves on the NCI Gastrointestinal Cancers Steering Committee (GISC). She serves in leadership roles in several advocacy organizations including National Pancreas Foundation,

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network and is on the Scientific Advisory Board for the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research.

An important update for our pancreatic cancer community, we are so happy to have Dr. Eileen O'Reilly present **Pancreatic Cancer Progress Report 2024** at the 18th Annual Symposium.

5-Year Survival Rate Increases to 13%

Today, the American Cancer Society (ACS) published the 2024 Cancer Facts & Figures Report, unveiling the latest information on pancreatic cancer and a notable rise in survivorship. According to the report, **the 5-year survival rate has reached 13%, marking a consecutive increase each year since 2021**. This new data demonstrates a shift in pancreatic cancer outcomes and reflects worldwide efforts to change the trajectory of this disease. Our community of long-term survivors, caregivers, and families, continue to be the strongest advocates and most passionate voices in this fight. We invite you to make a donation, participate in a Hirshberg event, and help educate your community so that we can continue to make strides toward a cure.

As the first nonprofit organization dedicated to pancreatic cancer research, the Hirshberg Foundation continues to lead the fight for a cure and share our mantra: *Never Give Up*. While the ACS report confirms that we are headed in the right direction, **it reaffirms the critical need for our work to continue.** To

date, pancreatic cancer remains the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States and the ACS facts and figures show us that an estimated 66,440 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year, **an increase of nearly 4% since last year.**

Funding research projects to improve patient care, treatments and, ultimately, pancreatic cancer survival rates remain a key pillar of the Hirshberg Foundation's mission. In the past few months alone, we have shared exciting details about our newest Seed Grant recipients, updates on early detection biomarkers, and the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in diagnostics. The Hirshberg Foundation looks forward to sharing more advances in 2024.

Although overall statistics for pancreatic cancer remain dire, the Hirshberg Foundation remains hopeful. We continue to prioritize empowering patients and providing resources to navigate a diagnosis, the ultimate goal being a long and healthy life. Founder, Agi Hirshberg, recognizes that statistics are only a part of a much bigger picture and there is life beyond this disease. At the Hirshberg Foundation's annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer she shared, *"I have a problem with the word survivor, I've never been comfortable with the term. I prefer heroes, I prefer champions, I prefer warriors, I prefer fighters, or I just prefer plain healthy."* As the 5-year survival rate continues to inch up, the foundation will continue to help patients navigate their diagnosis and provide critical support services through our Director of Patient Programs, Amy Reiss. The opening of the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Center is a vital resource available to patients too. Recognized nationally as a Clinical and Academic Center of Excellence, the needs of pancreatic cancer patients are met in one location with the most advanced treatment options.

The ACS report affirms that we are headed in the right direction, but there remains a critical need for our work to continue. As this new data is reviewed, we encourage you to be proactive and utilize the many resources available to our community. Start a personal cancer prevention plan by learning the risk factors today. If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, contact us. The 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer will be held on April 13th in person at UCLA, with videos made available to watch online. Registration Opens soon!

Read more on the ACS report →

Resources for Patients, Preventions, and Education

One-on-One Support
Patient & Family Webinars
Genetic Testing
Clinical Trials

Seed Grant Research Update: Biomarkers for Early Detection

The Hirshberg Foundation's Seed Grant Program remains instrumental in funding pancreatic cancer research worldwide, spanning many critical areas. Although pancreatic cancer is difficult to detect early, the Foundation is committed to changing these outcomes through scientific advancement. With this goal in mind, in 2017, Nelson Yee, MD, PhD, RPh was awarded a Seed Grant to fund a project for early detection: *Extracellular Vesicles as Biomarkers for Early Detection of*

Recurrent Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma. The aim of Dr. Yee's study is to determine whether Nanoscale extracellular vesicles cargo proteins and nucleic acids can sensitively detect early recurrence of pancreatic cancer. Early detection is a critical step to fighting pancreatic cancer. As he continues to make strides forward, we look forward to sharing more updates.

In 2022, Dr. Yee shared that ten (evaluable) enrolled patients had undergone surgical resection of pancreatic carcinoma. Each patient was followed up with surveillance and their blood specimens were to be collected and stored as described in the protocol. Dr. Yee and his team have been analyzing (using the proposed methodology and novel methodology) the blood specimens for extracellular vesicles and genetic mutations along with the clinicopathological data.

2023 Project Abstract:

The mortality rate of pancreatic cancer is among the highest among all human malignancies, and treatment is mostly palliative except for patients with localized tumor that can be resected with a curable intent. Even following surgical resection, the rate of tumor recurrence either locally or as distant metastasis is frequently high. Molecular biomarkers for early detection of tumor recurrence following surgical resection will facilitate prompt treatment and improve patient survival. However, there is no sensitive and specific method or biomarkers for detecting tumor recurrence.

Nanoscale extracellular vesicles (nEVs), molecules in bodily fluids, contain proteins and nucleic acids, which can reflect disease status. Hence, we hypothesize nEV cargo proteins and nucleic acids could sensitively detect early recurrence of pancreatic cancer. In our previous study, we developed a lipid nanoprobe (LNP) system for rapid and efficient nEV isolation and

performed subsequent nEV cargo analyses. The LNP system overcomes low throughput, low purity and other common shortcomings in nEV isolation, showing great potential for clinical use. This proposed research aims to use the LNP system to analyze several key proteins and genetic mutations, and to evaluate these molecules as biomarkers of pancreatic cancer recurrence.

The validation of this hypothesis will demonstrate the potential of nEV cargo as a promising tool to track evolution of pancreatic carcinoma and monitor tumor dynamics with the goal of improving survival of patients. We have completed collection of the blood specimens and molecular data as well as the clinicopathological data of the enrolled subjects. We have been analyzing the biospecimens along with the clinicopathological data, and we expect to report the study results in the year 2024.

To date, the Hirshberg Foundation has provided funding for more than 120 research projects in the following areas: treatment/therapy, patient care, early diagnosis, detection, cancer biology, basic science, prevention/metabolism and research core facilities. Make a donation today in support of early detection research and cutting-edge science funded by the Hirshberg Foundation.

Momentum Newsletter: Winter

2023

As 2023 comes to a close, the Hirshberg Foundation reflects on another exciting year marked by achievements in scientific collaboration, patient support, and much more. Your ongoing support has been instrumental in fulfilling our goals every year. Together, we are fostering innovation, driving advancements in research, and creating a meaningful difference in the well-being of patients.

Seed Grant Announcement

In August, a remarkable 126 Seed Grant applications were received, setting a record for the Foundation. Submissions poured in from locations across the United States and internationally, with a notable emphasis on collaborative initiatives involving multiple research institutions. We are delighted to unveil the 2023 Seed Grant Cohort with projects spanning early detection, treatment, immunotherapy, and basic science. You can also watch our Seed Grant Program video.

UCLA Scientists Meeting

This past October, we hosted a gathering of scientists and researchers working on pancreatic cancer at UCLA, highlighting some of our past Seed Grant awardees. With the goal of sharing innovative work across disciplines, connect researchers, and foster collaboration, it was an inspiring afternoon. Learn more about the presentations as their insights give hope for what's to come.

American Pancreatic Association Meeting

This year, we sponsored a groundbreaking symposium on Artificial Intelligence in Pancreatic Cancer at the American Pancreatic Association (APA) Annual Meeting. Moderated by our Scientific Advisory Board Chair, Miklos Sahin-Toth MD, PhD, the lectures were led by researchers from Mayo Clinic, Cedars Sinai, and MD Anderson Cancer Center each discussing innovation in the AI space as it relates to early detection and diagnostic tests. You can watch our APA Video on AI. With your support, we are empowering the medical community to pursue groundbreaking research and initiatives that make an impact across the globe.

Patient Support with CancerCare

Recently, we received our annual report from our esteemed financial aid partners at CancerCare. This enduring relationship has been pivotal to extending support to patients across the country through a modest one-time stipend. This assistance has provided funds to survivors for transportation, copays, treatment, and more. We can fund crucial patient programs like this thanks to your commitment and generosity.

Genetic Counseling Webinar

As part of Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, the Foundation offered an interactive Zoom webinar Ask a Genetic Counselor: A Q&A to learn about testing and risks with UCLA's Wendy Conlon, MS, CGC. This event, perfect for those with a family history of pancreatic cancer or those who have questions for a genetic counselor, addressed how knowing your family history and your

genetic makeup can affect medical care options for you and your loved ones. Watch the recorded webinar to learn more on this topic.

26th Annual LA CANCER CHALLENGE

October 23rd was a magical day for the LA Cancer Challenge as we celebrated great strides made in patient support and pancreatic cancer research. Coming together as a community to raise awareness and funds for research is one of the best days of the year for our community. Thanks to you, we raised over $547,000 as participants across 30 states and 3 countries shared our message of hope. Thank you for rallying with us as we Fight to the Finish. Rember to save the date for next year's LACC on Sunday, October 27th!

2024 Save the Dates

Symposium – Saturday, April 13, 2024
Hirshberg Training Team at the LA Marathon – Sunday, March 17, 2024
Purple People Party – Sunday, March 17, 2024
Tour de Pier – Sunday, May 19, 2024
LA Cancer Challenge – Sunday, October 27, 2024

The 2023 APA Meeting

highlights the impact of AI in pancreatic cancer research

The partnership between The Hirshberg Foundation and the American Pancreatic Association (APA) continues to unite brilliant minds, showcases significant topics and keynote speakers, and highlights the contributions of researchers through an annual award. The APA meeting typically assembles a global community of scientists and clinicians each year who present and delve into the latest research findings on pancreatic diseases. This year, the Foundation sponsored a groundbreaking symposium on Artificial Intelligence in Pancreatic Cancer and presented two remarkable scientists with an award for the Best Abstract in Pancreatic Cancer.

Moderated by our Scientific Advisory Board Chair, Miklos Sahin-Toth MD, PhD, individual presentations were led by researchers from Mayo Clinic, Cedars Sinai, and MD Anderson Cancer Center, each discussing innovation in the AI space as it relates to early detection and diagnostics. The topics included:

- Harnessing Next Generation Imaging for Redefining Early Pancreas Cancer Detection, presented by Ajit Goenka MD, FSAR.
- PDAC Risk Prediction Using Artificial Intelligence Analysis of Pre-Diagnostic Abdominal CT Scans, presented by Debiao Li PhD.
- Integrating Radiomics, AI, and Biomarkers into Early Detection Strategies, presented by Eugene Koay.

We invite you to watch a recording of these presentations and learn more about the impact of AI in pancreatic cancer research. The Foundation is dedicated to empowering an ever-growing research community by promoting the exploration of new and

innovative approaches to combat this disease.

Join us in also celebrating the winners of the 2023 Best Abstract in Pancreatic Cancer Award. Michael Pfluger MD at Johns Hopkins University was presented with the award based on his work on Ductal Cancerization at the Pancreatic Neck Margin – Prevalence and Clinical Implications. In addition, Xiuhui Shi MD at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center received the award for their work based on ZIP4 Promotes Anorexia and Cachexia Through Activating Tumor-Associated Macrophage Infiltration and GDF15 Secretion in Pancreatic Cancer Research.