



Paceline awarding nine research grants at Georgia Cancer Center from 2022 fundraising

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AUGUSTA, Ga. (August 2, 2023) – Every day, researchers, and staff at the Georgia Cancer Center (GCC) continue to reduce the burden of cancer in the state of Georgia and across the globe. The Paceline community is fueling innovative research to improve cancer prevention, advance treatments, and move more breakthroughs to more patients. Today, Paceline presented grants to nine cancer researchers.

"The work our scientists do in their labs relies on the passion, determination, and generosity of each team and individual who took part in PaceDay Weekend 2022," said Jorge C. Cortes, MD, director of the Georgia Cancer Center at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University. "Today's research projects can serve as beacon of hope, fueling our determination to unlock the mysteries of this disease. With Paceline, we will make groundbreaking discoveries, which could lead to new treatment options for cancer patients."

A review committee consisting of doctors, researchers, and administrators reviewed 23 project proposals, and depended on a rigorous peer-review process to select the awarded proposals. The competition was tight, but the following winners were identified:

- 1 **Dr. Ali S. Arbab**, "Targeting immunosuppressive M2 macrophages by engineered exosomes to control metastatic growth of breast cancers and improve survival" [Basic Science Research]
- 2 **Dr. Ahmed Chadli**, "Unleashing anti-tumor immunity against TNBC through inhibition of the cochaperone UNC45A and activation of the STING pathway" [Basic Science Research]
- 3 **Drs. Yukai He and Siva Panda**, "Armor CAR-Ts to improve tumor infiltration and antitumor effects" [Basic Science Research]

- 4 **Dr. Yan Cui**, “The role of tumor microenvironment adenosine in hindering antitumor immunity in spatial context” [Basic Science Research]
- 5 **Dr. Meng-Han Tsai**, “The development of a comprehensive colorectal cancer database in the Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia” [Health Disparities Research/Research in Underrepresented Populations]
- 6 **Dr. Bangxing Hong**, “Reversing IDO signaling activation during oncolytic virotherapy of pediatric highgrade glioma” [Translational Research]
- 7 **Dr. David Mysona**, “Utilization of artificial intelligence to predict the development of financial toxicity in gynecologic oncology” [Early-Career Investigator/ Trainee-Mentored Research]
- 8 **Dr. Pankaj Ahluwalia**, “Investigating the genomics of normal adjacent tumor (NAT) to understand the immunotherapy resistance in solid tumors” [Early-Career Investigator/ Trainee-Mentored Research]
- 9 **Mercy Kehinde-Ige**, “Investigating the effects of Stat5a on metabolism in CASTAT5-CD4+ T cells for adoptive cell therapy” [Early-Career Investigator/ Trainee-Mentored Research]

“As a cancer researcher at the Georgia Cancer Center, I really feel excited about the huge potential of this Paceline campaign,” said Yukai He, MD/PhD, a professor of Medicine at the Medical College of Georgia. “This is the reason I support this event year after year. Paceline not only provided the seed money for my research to jumpstart the work, but it also is a collective effort to make a team. That is the spirit we should have in research.”

In 2022, Paceline’s community of riders, fundraisers, sponsors, and supporters raised over \$400,000, allowing GCC to fund nine more innovative cancer research projects. Fundraising is a year-round effort, culminating in a celebration and fun bike ride on October 15, 2023, called “PaceDay” with an Opening Ceremony party the night before on Saturday, October 14th. Both PaceDay and its Opening Ceremony will start and finish at the historic downtown Augusta Common with a finish-line party to share with loved ones. PaceDay will again include its highly successful family-friendly closed circuit “1-mile loop” in downtown Augusta as well as the three open road rides that all pass by the Georgia Cancer Center.

Paceline President, Martyn Jones commented: “Its been said that; Nothing happens until something moves...a ball has to start rolling for change to occur... Or in our case turning wheels to set the pace for better treatments, prevention and cures for all types of cancer. On behalf of the Paceline community, Board & staff we are very proud that our combined efforts from the past 12 month are once again formally INVESTED in innovative cancer research. Crucially, Paceline maintains its 100% model whereby every single dollar donated is truly being invested as intended. The on-going support Paceline receives from the Medical College of Georgia Foundation makes this promise possible. We look forward to updating our community on the progress of these nine new cancer research projects.”

Registration for PaceDay 2023 is free at paceline.org. New and returning participants are encouraged to register as soon as possible to have adequate time to fundraise, prepare for the ride, and get involved with the Paceline community.

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About the Georgia Cancer Center at Augusta University

The Georgia Cancer Center at Augusta University is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer in Georgia and across the globe through superior care, innovation, and education. Through unprecedented expansion, the Georgia Cancer Center is providing access to more first-in-the-nation clinical trials, world-renowned experts and lifesaving options. For more information, visit augusta.edu/cancer.

About Paceline

Paceline is a movement of communities & organizations striving toward a common goal: cure cancer faster! Paceline is based in Augusta, Georgia, where **100%** of all fundraising goes to fund innovative cancer research at the Georgia Cancer Center. Together, we can *cure cancer faster*. Paceline has a place for everyone, offering opportunities to be involved on and off the bike. Ride. Fundraise. Volunteer. Join our movement by visiting <https://www.paceline.org/>