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**UCI ANTI-CANCER CHALLENGE FUNDS 12 ADDITIONAL RESEARCH GRANTS, TOTALING 72 PROJECTS FUNDED IN FIVE YEARS**

**Research aims to lead to the next breakthroughs in cancer treatment.**

ORANGE, CALIFORNIA - As a result of the 2021 UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge, 12 grants were awarded to UCI physician-scientists to fund pilot projects and early phase clinical trials at the UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. These projects include the application of artificial intelligence to the study of integrative oncology, identifying approaches to effectively target metastatic pancreatic cancer, understanding and addressing cancer survivorship needs for Filipino-Americans in Los Angeles and Orange counties, and more.

The 2021 funded projects are described along with the 60 projects from 2017 to 2020 in the UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge research portfolio, available at [www.anti-cancerchallenge.org](http://www.anti-cancerchallenge.org).

Within the past five years, the UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge ride, run and walk participants and donors have contributed over \$2.6 million to research at the UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and its pediatric cancer affiliate, Children's Health of Orange County (CHOC), advancing a total of 72 original studies, including the most recent awards, to prevent, diagnose or treat cancer.

Several of these grants have helped researchers produce critical preliminary data that justifies continued investigation of these innovative concepts, leading to more than \$21.9 million in extramural funding from government agencies and private foundations, a testament to the potential of the research to produce important outcomes.

Two start-up companies, GLYTR Therapeutics and Siege Therapeutics, have begun operations to pursue concepts from funded projects. GLYTR Therapeutics is developing a novel immunotherapy platform technology that targets diverse cancer types, ranging from breast cancer to leukemia. Siege Therapeutics is exploring new cancer drugs that are based on a naturally occurring molecule that starves cancer cells to death.

Five studies are working to address specific community needs. These range from evaluating social media as a means to increase preventive cancer screenings among Vietnamese families in Orange County and interventions to reduce adverse outcomes in young adult Hispanic men with testicular cancer.

Of the six clinical trials that began accruing patients, four have since closed to accrual, meaning they have reached their patient goal. These trials addressed opportunities to improve cancer treatment related to the brain, mouth, blood, colon and gastrointestinal tract.

"These types of high risk, high reward research projects funded by the UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge allow our physicians and investigators to generate crucial preliminary data," said Dr. Richard A. Van Etten, director of the UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and founder of the UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge. "The results of these projects not only can demonstrate a concept's validity, but also have the potential to attract large extramural awards necessary to continue making progress possible."

The 2022 UCI Anti-Cancer Challenge, the run, ride and walk event takes place on Saturday, Oct. 8, 2022 at UCI's Aldrich Park, with both in-person and virtual events leading up to Challenge Day. Visit [www.anticancerchallenge.org](http://www.anticancerchallenge.org) to register. Organizations interested in event sponsorship opportunities can contact Jennifer Sarraill at [Anti-CancerChallenge@uci.edu](mailto:Anti-CancerChallenge@uci.edu).