

**Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas**

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## **CANCER PREVENTION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS AWARDS 73 NEW GRANTS**

### ***Agency closes in on halfway point of its funding authority and surpasses 100 in number of top cancer researchers recruited to Texas institutions***

AUSTIN – The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) today awarded 73 new grants totaling approximately \$112 million: 60 grants through its academic research program, 12 grants through its prevention program and one grant through its product development research program.

CPRIT is nearing the halfway point of its funding authority. To date, the agency has awarded 992 grants totaling around \$1.47 billion. Counting the latest round of grants, CPRIT has funded the recruitment of more than 100 top cancer researchers to Texas institutions.

"These new grants sustain our momentum and will provide the impetus for potential new achievements in cancer prevention, treatment and cures," said Wayne Roberts, CPRIT chief executive officer. "CPRIT's research investments connect universities, investigators and private companies across our state, forming a critical mass of distinguished cancer-fighting talent. Texas is on the frontier of cancer science."

The product development research grant supports the work of a new company whose project is likely to bring important cancer care products to patients. With a total requested amount of \$20 million, the grant will help advance Ruga Corporation's development of a therapeutic to treat acute myeloid leukemia—a cancer of the blood and bone marrow—and other aggressive cancers. The company will be based in Houston, Texas.

The academic research grants, totaling nearly \$79 million, support the recruitment of five cancer scientists to academic institutions in Texas, including: promising researchers pursuing faculty appointment; outstanding early-stage researchers; and senior research faculty with distinguished professional careers and established cancer research programs. An additional 55 research grants support research training awards and a variety of innovative research projects that will significantly advance knowledge of the causes, prevention and treatment of cancer.

The prevention awards, totaling around \$13.2 million, support a range of prevention services for underserved populations in Texas. The projects aim to increase HPV vaccination rates and broaden access to colorectal cancer screenings. The programs receiving competitive continuation grants will provide screening, diagnostic and vaccination services. Additional competitive continuation grants support genetic risk assessment for cancer in South Texas and the establishment of a comprehensive cancer prevention and support program within Asian American communities in Texas.

*See attached for a list of all 73 academic research, prevention, and product development research grants awarded.*

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### **About the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas**

Beginning operations in 2009, CPRIT has to date awarded \$1.47 billion in grants to Texas researchers, institutions and organizations. CPRIT provides funding through its academic research, prevention, and product development research programs. Programs made possible with CPRIT funding have reached all 254 counties of the state, brought more than 100 distinguished researchers to Texas, advanced scientific and clinical knowledge, and provided more than 2.6 million life-saving education, training, prevention and early detection services to Texans. Learn more at [cprit.texas.gov \(http://www.cprit.texas.gov\)](http://www.cprit.texas.gov). Follow CPRIT at [twitter.com/CPRITTexas \(https://twitter.com/cprittexas\)](https://twitter.com/cprittexas) and [facebook.com/CPRITTexas \(https://www.facebook.com/cprittexas?rdr=p\)](https://www.facebook.com/cprittexas?rdr=p).

## **AWARDED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

### **New Company Product Development – One grant totaling \$20,000,000**

- **Ruga Corporation**, *Engineered AXL Decoy Receptor for Treatment of Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) and Solid Tumors* – Houston, three years, \$20,000,000 \*\*  
This project supports a more therapeutic option to treat AML and other aggressive cancers, including ovarian, endometrial, breast, renal and pancreatic.

\*\* *Maximum amount to be funded upon successful completion of all milestones*

## **AWARDED RESEARCH GRANTS**

### **Individual Investigator Awards – 39 grants totaling \$34,744,442**

- **Baylor College of Medicine**
  - *Decoding Cellular Heterogeneity of Malignant Glioma (Benjamin Deneen)* – \$899,701
  - *Protein Truncation Mutations in WIP1: Effects on Cancer and Hematopoiesis (Lawrence Donehower)* – \$900,000
  - *Promoting the Functions of Memory T Cells for Adoptive T Cell Therapy (Jin Wang)* – \$887,676
  - *Engineering T Cells to Ensure Specificity for Tumor Cells and Their Environment (Caroline Arber)* – \$900,000
  - *The CTC Circulator Phenotype: Insights Into Mechanisms of Breast Cancer Dormancy (Dario Marchetti)* – \$884,332
  - *The Role of PRDM16 and Histone H3 Lysine 9 Methyltransferase Complex in MDS (Daisuke Nakada)* – \$872,157
  - *Systematic Identification of Small Molecule Inhibitors That Manipulate Telomerase Activities (Zhou Songyang)* – \$898,288
- **The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**
  - *Development of Therapeutics Targeting Truncated Adenomatous Polyposis Coli (APC) as a Novel Prevention and Intervention Strategy for Colorectal Cancer (Jerry Shay)* – \$900,000
  - *Role of Long Non-Coding RNAs in Breast Cancer; Identification and Characterization, and Determination of Molecular Functions (Lee Kraus)* – \$886,652
  - *Carbamoyl Phosphate Synthase-1: A New Metabolic Liability in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancers (Ralph DeBerardinis)* – \$900,000
  - *Molecular Mechanism of NLRP12-Mediated Regulation of Colorectal Cancer (Hasan Zaki)* – \$897,707
  - *The Role of the Lats Kinases in Sarcomatoid Renal Cell Carcinoma (Thomas Carroll)* – \$899,598
  - *Targeting the Undruggable: A First-in-Class Inhibitor of the HIF-2 Transcription Factor (James Brugarolas)* – \$899,412

- *Role of PARP-1 in Estrogen Receptor Enhancer Function and Gene Regulation Outcomes in Breast Cancer (Lee Kraus) – \$884,315*
- *Novel Tumorigenic Mechanisms of the LKB1 Tumor Suppressor in Endometrial and Cervical Cancer (Diego Castrillon) – \$896,653*
- *Structural and Functional Analysis of the Spindle Checkpoint (Xuelian Luo) – \$900,000*
- *Targeting Metastatic Pathways (Lance Terada) – \$900,000*
- *DNA Damage-Induced Small Non-Coding RNAs: Mechanism and Their Role in Cancer Development (Yi Liu) – \$900,000*
- *Characterization and Pharmacological Targeting of the Oncogenic Activity of Jumonji Enzymes (Elisabeth Martinez) – \$899,997*
  
- **The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center**
  - *Amplified Gold Nanoparticle-Mediated Radiosensitization of Tumors (Sunil Krishan) – \$899,309*
  - *Imaging-based Quantitative Analysis of Vascular Perfusion and Tissue Oxygenation to Improve Therapy of Hepatocellular Carcinoma (Rony Avritscher) – \$885,901*
  - *Understanding Biological and Physical Factors Affecting Response to Proton Therapy to Improve Clinical Effectiveness (Dragan Mirkovic) – \$879,362*
  - *Exploiting Molecular and Metabolic Dependencies to Optimize Personalized Therapeutic Approaches for Melanomas (Michael Davies) – \$900,000*
  - *Mechanisms and Targeting Strategies for SWI/SNF Mutations in Cancer (Xuetong Shen) – \$900,000*
  - *Visualizing T Cell Trafficking (Vikas Kundra) – \$900,000*
  - *An Adaptive Personalized Clinical Trial Using a Patient-Derived Xenograft Strategy to Overcome Ibrutinib Resistance in Cell Lymphoma (Michael Wang) – \$841,606*
  - *Investigating the Genetic and Molecular Mechanisms Underlying RAS/ERK Substrate Network (Swathi Arur) – \$900,000*
  - *Regulation of Infiltration and Function of Tumor-Resident CD8 T Cells by IL-15 (Kimberly Schluns) – \$828,060*
  - *Exosomal DNA as a Surrogate Biomarker for Early Diagnosis and Therapeutic Stratification in Pancreatic Cancer (Anirban Maitra) – \$891,938*
  - *Nanoparticle Targeted STAT3 Immune Expression (Amy Heimberger) – \$888,429*
  - *Clinical Safety and Efficacy of Third Party, Fucosylated Cord Blood Derived Regulator T Cells to Prevent Graft Versus Host Disease (Simrit Parmar) – \$900,000*
  - *Radiogenomic Screen to Identify Novel Proliferation Associated Glioblastoma Genomic Therapeutic Targets: Discovery and Mechanistic Validation Study (Rivka Colen) – \$897,627*
  - *Identifying New Epigenetic Vulnerabilities in Pancreatic Cancer (Giulio Draetta) – \$900,000*
  
- **The Methodist Hospital Research Institute**
  - *De-Orphanizing TLX: Implications for Glioblastomas (Paul Webb) – \$878,969*
  
- **Baylor Research Institute**
  - *A novel function of Itch in Controlling IL-17-Induced Inflammation in Colon Cancer (Venuprasad Poojary) – \$900,000*
  
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio**
  - *Integrin-Mediated IL-18 Signaling in the Prevention and Treatment of Inflammation-Associated Colorectal Cancer (Peter Dube) – \$859,620*
  
- **The University of Texas at Dallas**
  - *Regulation of Tumor Aggressiveness and Immune Suppression in Lung Adenocarcinoma*

(Qingyun Liu) – \$900,000

- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston**
  - *Regulation of Tumor Aggressiveness and Immune Suppression in Lung Adenocarcinoma* (Qingyun Liu) – \$900,000
- **Texas A&M University System Health Science Center**
  - *Improving Contrast for Antibody–Based Tumor Detection Using PET* (Elizabeth Ward) – \$887,134

### **Individual Investigator Research Awards for Cancer in Children and Adolescents – Five grants totaling \$6,105,638**

- **The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center**
  - *A novel Epigenetic Reader as Therapeutic Target in MLL–Translocated Pediatric Leukemias* (Xiaobing Shi) – \$900,000
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio**
  - *Cytokine Signaling in Ewing Sarcoma* (Yuzuru Shio) – \$1,200,000
- **The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**
  - *Pediatric Radiation Oncology with Movie Induced Sedation Effect* (Steve Jiang) – \$900,000
  - *DIS3L2 in Childhood Wilms Tumor: Mechanisms to Medicine* (Joshua Mendell) – \$1,200,000
- **Baylor College of Medicine**
  - *Role of Cohesin in Hematopoiesis and Myeloid Leukemia in Children with Down Syndrome* (Debanada Pati) – \$1,905,638

### **Individual Investigator Research Award for Computational Biology – One grant totaling \$392,779**

- **The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**
  - *Computational Live Cell Histology* (Gaudenz Danuser) – \$392,779

### **Individual Investigator Research Awards for Prevention and Early Detection – Six grants totaling \$6,552,005**

- **The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**
  - *A Randomized Controlled Trial of Patient Navigation for Lung Cancer Screening in an Urban Safety–Net System* (David Gerber) – \$1,492,616
  - *Effect of Chest Radiation Therapy on Cardiomyocyte Turnover* (Hesham Sadek) – \$897,570
- **Texas AgriLife Research**
  - *Arylhydrocarbon Receptor Mediated Modulation of Colorectal Cancer by Microbiota Metabolites* (Robert Chapkin) – \$890,840
- **The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center**
  - *Early Detection of Ovarian Cancer with Tumor Associated Proteins and Autoantibodies* (Robert Bast) – \$1,497,595
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio**
  - *Chemoprevention of Colon Cancer by Anti–Inflammatory Blockade Using Neem* (Michael

Wargovich) – \$899,619

- **Rice University**

- *High Resolution Imaging for Early and Better Detection of Bladder Cancer (Rebecca Richards-Kortum) – \$873,765*

### **Research Training Awards – Four grants totaling \$14,966,408**

- **Baylor College of Medicine**

- *Comprehensive Cancer Training Program (Jeffrey Rosen) – \$3,986,268*
- *Cancer Prevention Post-Graduate Training Program in Integrative Epidemiology (Margaret Spitz) – \$2,986,890*

- **The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**

- *Cancer Intervention and Prevention Discovery Programs (Michael White) – \$3,993,250*

- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston**

- *Collaborative Training of a New Cadre of Innovative Cancer Prevention Researchers (Roberta Ness) – \$4,000,000*

### **Recruitment of First Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members\* :**

- **Baylor College of Medicine**

- *Dung-fang Lee, Ph.D., Recruitment to The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai – \$2,000,000*
- *Nidhi Sahni, Ph.D., Recruitment to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute – \$2,000,000*
- *Zhijie Liu, Ph.D., Recruitment to The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio from Howard Hughes Medical Institute, University of California at San Diego – \$2,000,000*

### **Recruitment of Rising Stars\* :**

- **Baylor College of Medicine**

- *Andrew Rhim, M.D., Recruitment to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center from the University of Michigan – \$4,000,000*

### **Recruitment of Established Investigators\* :**

- **Baylor College of Medicine**

- *Wei Yang, Ph.D., Recruitment to The University of Texas at Austin from the National Institutes of Health – \$6,000,000*

\* Recruitment grants awarded indicate only approval to negotiate offers; at the time of release candidates have not accepted offers.

## **AWARDED PREVENTION GRANTS**

### **Evidence-Based Cancer Prevention Services:**

- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (Deborah Parra-Medina) – Using Best Practices to Promote HPV Vaccination in Rural Primary Care Settings – \$1,295,493**
- **Protein Truncation Mutations in WIP1: Effects on Cancer and Hematopoiesis (Lawrence**

*Donehower*) – \$900,000

- **The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center** (*Lewis Foxhall*) – *Improving Service Delivery to Cancer Survivors in Primary Care Settings* – \$1,374,127
- **The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston** (*Abbey Berenson*) – *Maximizing opportunities for HPV Vaccination in the Golden Triangle* – \$1,409,909

### **Evidence-Based Cancer Prevention Services – Colorectal Cancer Prevention Coalition:**

- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler** (*Edward Sauter*) – *Optimizing Colorectal Cancer Screening in East Texas* – \$2,299,753

### **Competitive Continuation/Expansion Grants:**

- **Baylor College of Medicine** (*Matthew Anderson*) – *Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Screening Program for Medically Underserved Women in Harris County* – \$1,500,000
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston** (*Lara Savas*) – *Community-Based Program to Increase Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening and HPV Vaccination to Reduce the Impact of Breast and Cervical Cancer Among Latinas* – \$1,387,005
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio** (*Gail Tomlinson*) – *GRACIAS Texas: Genetic Risk Assessment for Cancer in All South Texas* – \$1,500,000
- **Light and Salt Association** (*Helen Sun*) – *Establishing a Comprehensive Cancer Prevention and Support Program Within Asian American Communities in Houston and Austin* – \$1,101,986

### **Cancer Prevention Promotion and Navigation to Clinical Services Grants:**

- **Texas A&M University** (*Lei-Shih Chen*) – *Family Health History-Based Colorectal Cancer Prevention and Navigation to Clinical Services Among Uninsured Chinese Americans in Texas* – \$399,993
- **Coastal Bend Wellness Foundation** (*Bill Hoelscher*) – *Rural Education and Awareness for Community Health (REACH)* – \$379,698

### **Dissemination of CPRIT-Funded Cancer Control Intervention Grants:**

- **Texas A&M University System Health Science Center** (*Jane Bolin*) – *Training CHWs for More Effective Cancer Education and Navigation* – \$300,000
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston** (*Maria Fernandez*) – *Dissemination of Evidence-Based HPV Vaccination Intervention in Community and Clinical Settings* – \$299,778

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