

JOINING FORCES in the Fight Against Cancer

Incyte/Penn Alliance explores immunotherapy on the path to a cure

GOAL: CREATE A DYNAMIC and productive alliance that makes a demonstrable impact on positive outcomes in treating cancer patients.

Strategy: Partner biopharmaceutical leader Incyte Corporation with the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania in a multi-year oncology research collaboration.

Announced early in 2017, the Incyte/Penn alliance was created and builds on the fundamental premise that investment in research creates valuable results for patients and the community. Incyte and the University of Penn posited that joining their strengths in academic research and in pharmaceutical development would be a highly effective model for meeting the needs of their patients.

Incyte's Chief Scientific Office Reid Huber, Ph.D., and Group Vice President of Preclinical Pharmacology and Discovery Biology Peggy Scherle, Ph.D., along with University of Pennsylvania's oncology scientists Greg Beatty and Steve Albeda, took the lead in developing the alliance.

"This alliance advances research within academia as well as our science within Incyte, ultimately for the benefit of patients," says Huber. "We create a stronger enterprise by collaborating with organizations like Penn."

Incyte is active in exploring and discovering novel therapeutics – therapies and medicines that are first in class. Penn has expertise in preclinical biology, the science applied before clinical trials, and translational science, studies that connect the science from the lab to trial outcomes to actual patient results. Together, Incyte and Penn can develop better-informed rationale for which types of treatments, and combinations thereof, should be matched to which types of patients and their individual needs.

The collaboration entails several defined grants and research-funding projects in specific areas of immunotherapy, which is an emerging

science aimed at harnessing the patient's own immune system to attack and ultimately eradicate their cancer. Each project is expected to reach completion within the arranged timeframe of the partnership. A joint steering committee governs the relationship and will assess results and progress each year. It also will evaluate potential future research partnerships, funding, and assist in directing paths to discovery and in aligning Incyte products with potential clinical studies. Incyte will

contribute financial support for research endeavors, as well as assist with other research efforts pertaining to cancer immunology.

The two organizations will also be combining their strengths to create a bioinformatics program in clinical immunotherapy. Bioinformatics refers to all the computational research that underpins lab research, such as DNA sequencing, and involves terabytes of data that needs to be analyzed, processed and stored. By advancing their understanding of immunotherapy through Incyte's successful therapeutics and Penn's technology and research, they hope to more effectively develop therapies for specific patient populations.

"We want to become smarter about what we're trying to accomplish. So, we take the best and brightest in immunotherapy at Penn and connect them to the resources they need, which Incyte can provide, to make a difference in the lives of patients.

Ideally, we will successfully advance novel concepts to clinical development, and identify opportunities to improve treatment outcomes for cancer patients," says Huber.

This will be Incyte's third multi-year, multi-million-dollar collaboration with an academic institution. They are also working with the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center in Tennessee on multiple areas of cancer research; and the Moffitt Cancer Center in Florida primarily focusing on leukemia and lymphoma. ■



*Reid Huber, Ph.D.,
Chief Scientific Officer at Incyte*

