

# PRESS RELEASE

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February 15, 2024

## **DIPG DMG Research Funding Alliance Announces Awards \$400,000 in New Grants for Kids Brain Cancer on International Childhood Cancer Day.**

The DIPG DMG Research Funding Alliance (DDRFA) is excited to announce the allocation of \$400,000 in new grants, distributed across five groundbreaking projects. These projects will propel the research, data use and clinical trials in the area of Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG), Midline Gliomas (DMG) and when possible Gliomatosis Cerebri (GC), with the aim of advancing treatments for children affected by these challenging conditions in the most deadly pediatric cancer types.

One such project, led by Jasper Van der Lugt, MD, of the Princess Maxima Center for Pediatric Oncology, in working with the Pacific Neuro Oncology Consortium (PNO) to leverage biospecimens and data from PNO022 clinical trial in an effort to better comprehend the role of the intestinal microbiome in relation to treatment response. The results of this research have the potential to support the hypothesis within PNO022 that changes in the microbiome can serve as predictive markers for clinical outcomes in pediatric DMG. The DDRFA funders include: Elle's Angels Foundation, Rally! Foundation for Childhood Cancer Research, Princess Hailey's Hope Foundation, The Morgan Adams Foundation; Tough2gether Foundation and Magic for Maddie.

Another significant effort, spearheaded by Nicholas Vitanza, MD, of Seattle Children's Hospital, will focus on the evaluation of promising drugs against DMG in combination with B7-H3 CAR T cells. Dr. Vitanza's team aims to assess the efficacy of these therapies in killing DMG cells and to understand how the drugs impact the function of the CAR T cells. His goal, ultimately, is to advance combinational clinical trials that maintain the effectiveness of the CAR T cells. The DDRFA funders include: Levi's Legacy DIPG Foundation, Gold Rush Cure Foundation, Team Landon Clay Foundation, Magic for Maddie, Tough2gether Foundation with the Abernathy Family in memory of Kaia, Avery Strong: Avery Huffman DIPG Foundation, Team Cozzi Foundation, Live Gray's Way with the Wainhouse Family in memory of Zander, Noah Brave Foundation, and The GWEB Never Forgotten Foundation.

Dr. John Prensner, MD, PhD, of Michigan University, plans to utilize the grant he is awarded to delve into RNA associated with the H3K27M mutation, which is prevalent in approximately 80% of all DIPG and DMG tumors. His research will aim to investigate whether ribosome-stressing inhibitors can induce improper ribosome behavior, leading to cell death in pre-clinical disease models. This work has the potential to shed light on the relationship between stress resulting from ribosome dysfunction and DIPG cell behavior. Collaborative funders include: Book for Hope, The Morgan Adams Foundation and Tough2gether Foundation.

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## **DDRFA PRESS RELEASE CONT.**

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With promise of a new clinical trial on the horizon, Randy Schrenegost, PhD, of Targepeutics Therapeutics, will leverage the grant awarded to Targepeutics to support the completion of pre-clinical requirements necessary to initiate a Phase I clinical trial for the use of the novel immunotoxin GB 13 in treating DIPG and DMG. Targepeutics Therapeutics plans to manufacture clinical-grade GB 13 and will conduct toxicology testing with the aim of testing GB 13 as a therapeutic option for children diagnosed with DIPG/DMG. This grant will be added to other foundation funding for this important work. DDRFA funders include: Arms Wide Open Childhood Cancer Foundation, The Musella Foundation for Brain Tumor Research and Information; Tater Tough, Storm the Heavens, Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, and Tough2gether Foundation.

Lastly, DDRFA awards funding to the Children's Brain Tumor Network (CBTN) where DDRFA will serve for a second year on CBTN's Executive Council taking part in discussions to set priorities for data discoveries for pediatric brain cancer, including DMG and DIPG. CBTN has been instrumental in supporting the sequencing of tumor specimens and aggregation of multiomics information for DIPG DMG among other pediatric brain cancers. CBTN broadly shares patient data and tissue with researchers throughout the academic landscape. The DDRFA funders include: Arms Wide Open Childhood Cancer Foundation, Cannonballs for Kayne Foundation, Cancer Commons, Book for Hope, The Morgan Adams Foundation, Tough2gether Foundation, Team Landon Clay Foundation, Mithil Prasad Foundation, and Neev Kolte Brave Ronil Foundation.

DDRFA is proud to support these remarkable endeavors and is actively working to accelerate progress in this critical field through the collaboration of over 50 foundations dedicated to advancing treatments for DIPG, DMG and GC. Through collaborative research, clinical trials, and dedicated data efforts, the DDRFA through its members are tirelessly working to find solutions. DDRFA knows well DIPG, GC and DMG Won't Wait, so DDRFA won't either. The DDRFA invites foundations to join this funding collaborative which funds the DIPG DMG National Brain Tumor Board and semi annual grants for research, clinical trials and data use benefitting DIPG, DMG.

For more information about the DIPG DMG Research Funding Alliance and the incredible work being undertaken in this field, please visit our website at [www.DDRFA.org](http://www.DDRFA.org)

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