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Cooper Foundation Receives \$2.2 Million Donation to Fund Stem Cell Research

(CAMDEN, NJ) -- The Cooper Foundation has received a gift of \$2.2 million to fund specialized research to explore the role of a unique line of stem cells in certain cancers, wound healing, and vision. The donation will also facilitate expansion of basic science research at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University.

The funding was provided by a grateful former patient of Richard D. Lackman, MD, Director of Orthopaedic Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper, who wishes to remain anonymous. Dr. Lackman, who joined Cooper in 2012, is an internationally known clinical leader and expert in the treatment of sarcomas – one of three areas the research will focus on.

“I am very excited about this generous donation that will allow a rigorous inquiry into a new stem cell and its possible special role in not only the development of sarcomas, and other organs undergoing fibrosis, but also may accelerate wound healing,” said Dr. Lackman. “This three pronged approach will serve as a platform and catalyst to advance the field of stem cell research and further explore the role of Myo/Nog cells.”

This newly funded research will focus on three projects related to Myo/Nog stem cells with the goal of improving clinical outcomes in patients with sarcoma cancers, wound healing, and neurogenerative diseases.

The research will examine the unique role of Myo/Nog stem cells, which were discovered approximately 20 years ago by Mindy George -Weinstein, PhD, Research Director at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. While Myo/Nog stem cells are critical for normal embryonic development, these cells, when present in tissue later in life may be helpful or harmful depending on their location.

Dr. Lackman, Dr. Mindy George-Weinstein, and Spencer Brown, MD, Director of the Cooper Research Institute, will serve as the project executive leaders. As a multi-institutional project, investigative teams will be supported at Cooper University Health Care, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, Rowan University, and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

“We are extremely grateful to our donor for their incredible generosity and amazing vision to advance stem cell research at Cooper University Health Care,” said Susan Bass Levin, President

and Chief Executive Officer of The Cooper Foundation. "This gift is a beacon of hope for millions of individuals who suffer from devastating diseases that might be eliminated by breakthrough treatments that may emerge from this stem cell research."

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