



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Innovative program prepares doctors to conduct cancer research

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — Four talented cancer researchers, chosen through a competitive process, just completed the Southwest Oncology Group Young Investigators Training Course. The course puts the physicians on a fast track to develop and conduct cancer clinical trials through the Southwest Oncology Group. The researchers include:

- Cathy Eng, M.D., assistant professor of Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.
- Rami Komrokji, M.D., assistant professor of Medicine at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Melanie R. Palomares, M.D., assistant professor of Medical Oncology at City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, Calif.
- John Strother, M.D., fellow of Hematology and Medical Oncology at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland Oregon.

With a network of more than 5,000 investigators practicing medicine throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, the Southwest Oncology Group is one of the largest cancer clinical trials cooperative groups in the United States. The majority of the trials are funded by grants from the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health.

It is important to encourage young physicians interested in research to join the ranks, said Chairman Laurence H. Baker, D.O. “Cancer research is in a very exciting phase. New developments are coming out every day and we want to make sure that we take advantage of every fresh, new idea out there,” Baker said. “Helping these bright, young doctors learn how to properly conduct clinical trials will help the Group and cancer researchers everywhere come closer to preventing and treating cancer, and improving the quality of life for cancer survivors,” he said.

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The four physicians were selected based on a concept they hope to develop into a clinical trial in the Southwest Oncology Group and the recommendation of their medical institution. During the Young Investigators Training Course, which ended Sept. 14, the doctors received intensive training in statistical principles, data collection, analysis, critical decision-making and procedures. These skills will help them to be successful in proposing relevant clinical trials through Southwest Oncology Group that are more likely to be approved and funded. They also will be more adept at designing trials that will collect meaningful data that can contribute to the fight against cancer.

The young investigators hope to find a new way to prevent breast cancer, develop an improved treatment for pancreatic cancer, test a new combination of chemotherapy and surgery to treat cancer of the anal canal, and apply a drug already used for lung cancer to leukemia.

This is the ninth group of doctors to go through the Young Investigators Training Course. Ten studies have been conducted in Southwest Oncology Group as a result of the course.

For more information about the investigators, the training course or the Southwest Oncology Group, please contact Rosanne Fohn at 210-677-8808 or rfohn@swog.org.

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