



April 28, 2008

For more information, contact:

Southwest Oncology Group

734-998-7140

Karen Giles, kargiles@umich.edu

Southwest Oncology Group News for Immediate Release

Southwest Oncology Group renews focus on gynecologic malignancies

Reactivation of disease committee will provide a critically important new venue for the conduct of clinical research in the area of gynecologic malignancies.

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The Southwest Oncology Group (SWOG) has reactivated its Gynecologic Cancer Committee (GCC) with a \$250,000 grant from the Marsha Rivkin Center for Ovarian Cancer Research. The one-time grant to the philanthropic arm of SWOG, the Hope Foundation, will defer the expense associated with the start-up of this committee, including costs associated with coordination of education and research initiatives. The mission of the Marsha Rivkin Center (www.marsharivkin.org) is to save lives and reduce suffering through improved treatment, early detection, and prevention of ovarian cancer.

The renewal of SWOG's GCC enhances the Rivkin Center's mission of improved treatment by providing a necessary and critically important vehicle for clinical research of new therapies in the treatment of all gynecologic malignancies. The focus of the committee will be working with medical oncologists on innovative phase 1-2 and phase 2 trials. This focus presents a vehicle for moving crucial discoveries made within the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Ovarian SPOREs more quickly to clinical research. These phase 1-2 and phase 2 trials will center on oncogene and suppressor gene targeted therapies for gynecologic malignancies.

Maurie Markman, M.D., professor and vice president of clinical research at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center has been named the Marsha Rivkin Chair of the GCC. "The revitalization of the committee has been met with great enthusiasm from the research community, from within SWOG, as well as the NCI [National Cancer Institute]. The GCC will allow us to work with both medical oncologists and gynecologic oncologists involved in the care of women with gynecologic cancer," says Dr. Markman.

“Since the close of the SWOG GCC in 2003, oncologists caring for women with gynecologic cancers have had limited NCI-sponsored cooperative groups in which to propose and carry out clinical trials for patients. This fact severely limited the number and type of clinical studies available for these women, especially women with advanced disease,” says SWOG Executive Officer Anne Schott, M.D.

A key feature of the GCC is the extension of special membership privileges to physicians and nurses in cancer centers outside of the established SWOG network to provide more women with gynecologic cancers opportunity for trial participation. SWOG has rejoined the Gynecologic Cancer Intergroup (GCIG) and also has representation on the Steering Committee at the NCI.

The Southwest Oncology Group (www.swog.org) is one of the largest cancer clinical trials cooperative groups in the United States. Funded by research grants from the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, the group conducts clinical trials to prevent and treat cancer in adults, and to improve the quality of life for cancer survivors. The group's network of more than 5,000 physician-researchers practice at nearly 550 institutions, including 18 National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers. Headquartered in Ann Arbor, Mich. (734-998-7130), the group has an operations office in San Antonio, Tex. and a statistical center in Seattle, Wash.

###