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Connecting Hope and Medical Science

Summer 2008 ■ Issue 5



Focus ON THE Search

Clinical trials advancing the quest for cancer treatment, management, and prevention.

Connecting Hope
and Medical Science

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CCRP Funding Update: Our May 19th Golf Tournament

The second annual CCRP golf tournament was held on May 19th at Valley Country Club in Arapahoe County. The golf tournament is CCRP's primary fundraising event and is open to the public.

One hundred golfers participated, including doctors, hospital teams, and financial service teams, and \$30,000 was raised. Mark Randall, Denver Nuggets community ambassador, served as emcee. Prizes were awarded for highest scores, and dinner and silent auction followed the golfing.



Arthur Boss (left) and Dr. Robert Berris, one of CCRP's founders.

Nathan Mendel, owner of Mendel & Company Construction and a sponsor of the event spoke of his reasons for sponsoring: "Cancer research is crucial. I'm not sure there is anyone out there who has not been personally and deeply affected by cancer. I've lost two aunts and an uncle to the disease. My office manager lost her mother to it just last year and her father is battling it now. This is an event and a cause that I am proud to sponsor." There are plans to hold the third annual CCRP golf tournament in 2009; specific date and location TBD.

CCRP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; NCI funds only 50% of CCRP's \$1.6 million budget. 86% of all revenues (NCI funds and other funds combined) are applied directly to programs. Only 14% of the revenues go to support administrative services. CCRP is very grateful for the enthusiastic participation in such fundraising events as the golf tournament!



Thanks to Discount Tire for their generous contribution, which provided the resources for CCRP to upgrade essential medical equipment and supplies. Partners like Discount Tire make our work possible!

Focus ON THE Search

Focus on the Search is a quarterly publication of resources for people who are current or past participants in cancer clinical trials in Colorado and for people who have been recently diagnosed with cancer.

Colorado Cancer Research Program (CCRP) is a non-profit organization, a partnership of 17 Colorado community hospitals, and their affiliated doctors, dedicated to the advancement of cancer research and care close to home. CCRP is a Community Clinic Oncology Program, one of 50 such programs nationwide.

CCRP's Partner Hospitals

Boulder Community Hospital
Exempla Lutheran Medical Center
Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital
Longmont United Hospital
McKee Medical Center
Medical Centers of Aurora
North Colorado Medical Center
North Suburban Medical Center
Penrose-St. Francis Health Services
Porter Adventist Hospital
Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center
Rose Medical Center
St. Anthony Hospitals
St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center
St. Mary's Hospital
Sky Ridge Medical Center
Swedish Medical Center

What's New from CCRP

More from Members of the CCRP Trial Participant Advisory Council (TPAC)

Last issue we met Jennifer Bobbing, Fred Cottingham, Judy Daggett, Greg DeCuir, and Judy Lee Paez, five members of TPAC. (TPAC was created in fall 2007 to provide advice and recommendations to CCRP on clinical trial recruitment, community education, and what would be useful to know from the trial participant's perspective.)

In this issue, we share these members' ideas on how to encourage people to participate in clinical trials. Here is what they would like to tell people who are already considering clinical trials as well as people who do not yet know anything about clinical trials.

For People Who Are Already Considering Clinical Trials

- "You have been given an opportunity for an advanced form of treatment. Since your doctor has suggested it, there is a reason why she or he believes it is advantageous to be on the trial."
- "I would cite my own experience."
- "This could well be for your benefit and it will not be dangerous."
- "Have someone with you to find out about and evaluate clinical trials."
- "Seriously consider participating in order to expand your knowledge of the cancer community. Hopefully, some day, the cancer community will have better answers because of the learning provided from clinical trials."
- "Pursue it to the point where you feel you understand enough to make a good decision."
- "Prevention trials are ways in which healthy people can do something in the fight against cancer."
- "Clinical trials offer hope in some very difficult situations."
- "If we can find ways to prevent cancer, there is no question how much better that is than treating cancer."

For People Who Don't Know Anything about Clinical Trials

- "Get answers to your questions. 'What does it mean in terms of positive side effects?' 'What does it mean in terms of negative side effects?' 'What does it mean in terms of time, emotions, and finances?'"
- "Clinical trials are ways to get more information from the medical community. It helps you from the standpoint of being carefully tracked by the medical community."
- "Now I have a better understanding of how things work and I know the medical community won't know anything quickly, but they will know it eventually."
- "A trial is the best way we know to try to achieve reasonable results."
- "You really do feel like you are making a contribution."
- "Participating in a prevention trial is a way of supporting someone who is already dealing with cancer."

NIH Launches Website for Seniors Interested in Clinical Trials

Sponsored by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the National Institute on Aging (NIA), and posted on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) main website, this site gives details on trial participation in clear language and from the perspective of a patient with cancer. "The risk of many diseases and conditions increases with age, and it is important that clinical trials include older participants who can help researchers find out if a drug therapy, lifestyle change, device, or medical test is safe and effective in the older population," says Richard Hodes, M.D., and Director of NIA. The content is available both in text format and as an audiovisual presentation with subtitles that parallel the audio portion. Check out the site at <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/participatinginclinicaltrials/toc.html>.

Focus on the Search is published quarterly by Colorado Cancer Research Program.

This Issue's Featured Clinical Trial

E4402 for Lymphoma

- This randomized phase III trial is studying two different schedules of the monoclonal antibody rituximab and comparing them to see how well they work in treating patients with low tumor burden indolent stage III non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or stage IV non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- All patients will receive an infusion of rituximab once a week for four weeks. Eight weeks later, some patients will be randomly assigned to one of two groups. Patients in group one will receive an infusion of rituximab once a week for four weeks; patients in group two will receive an infusion of rituximab every 13 weeks for as long as benefit is shown.
- Participants must be at least 18 years of age; have no measurable disease; and have had no previous biological therapy, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy for lymphoma. Participants will be evaluated at least once a year for 15 years.

Resources

- Lymphoma Research Foundation, www.lymphoma.org
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, www.lls.org
- National Cancer Institute, www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/non-hodgkin

Colorectal Cancer Drugs Require Careful Patient Selection

Patients with advanced colorectal cancer who have mutant forms of the gene *KRAS* in their tumors should not receive chemotherapy and cetuximab (Erbix), because they are unlikely to benefit from the treatment and should be spared the side effects and cost, researchers said at the recent American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting in Chicago.

Based on a growing body of evidence, experts predict that it will become standard practice to test all colorectal tumors for mutations in the *KRAS* gene before starting patients with advanced disease on therapies involved cetuximab and a similar drug, panitumumab (Vectibix). An estimated 30 to 40 percent of colorectal tumors carry *KRAS* mutations, and commercial screening tests are available.