News Highlights

November 6, 2015

Excellence in Research Award Recipients

Earl Stoner, President of the Friends of the UH Cancer Center

The Friends of the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center announced winners of its quarterly Excellence in Research Award in October 2015. Each recipient was awarded $4,500 of which more than 80 percent will go back into research.

Michele Carbone, MD, PhD, director of the UH Cancer Center’s Thoracic Oncology Program was a recipient for his study, Minimal asbestos exposure in germline BAP1 heterozygous mice is associated with deregulated inflammatory response and increased risk of mesothelioma.

Dr. Michele Carbone

The study published in Oncogene outlines the discovery of BAP1 as the first gene that predisposes people to mesothelioma and other cancers. The discovery will potentially allow those who are at high risk for the disease to be screened for the genetic susceptibility earlier leading to improved prognosis. Carbone and his colleagues are now following more than forty United States families affected by BAP1 mutations.

"I am very grateful to the Friends of the Cancer Center for providing this award that will be used to support the cost of testing family members for BAP1 mutations," said Dr. Carbone.

James Turkson, PhD, UH Cancer Center’s chief academic lead and director of the Natural Products and Experimental Therapeutics Program was also an award recipient for his study, Hydroxamic acid and benzoic acid-based Stat3 inhibitors suppress human glioma and breast cancer phenotypes in vitro and in vivo.
Dr. James Turkson

Dr. Turkson and his research team discovered two chemical compounds that effectively stop the growth of brain cancer cells and breast tumors, opening the way for potential new drugs to be developed. In the study published in the journal Cancer Research, Turkson and collaborators examined compounds that inhibit Stat3, a protein implicated in a variety of cancers that include brain and breast cancers.

"It is a great honor to receive this award from the Friends. In addition to our gratitude, this support will contribute to enhancing our research activities in making discoveries that help prevent and treat cancer patients. The Friends have always been a strong support for the Cancer Center and we are fortunate to have them," said Dr. Turkson.

The Excellence in Research Award sponsored by the Friends of the UH Cancer Center, recognizes significant scientific publications on studies conducted by Cancer Center researchers. A panel of experts reviews the award submissions. The winners are selected based on how well the research advances the particular field of study, how it supports the overall mission of the UH Cancer Center, and the impact factor of the journal in which the paper was published. Impact factor is defined as a measure of the average number of times recent articles published in a particular journal are cited.