

Alabama Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders and UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center Researcher Awarded Grant to Support Pediatric Brain Tumor Research

BIRMINGHAM (June 9, 2014) – Dr. Gregory Friedman recently won a \$40,000 grant to support his research to fight brain cancer in children.

Dr. Friedman, an assistant professor of pediatrics and associate scientist in the Neuro-Oncology program at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center and Alabama Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders at Children's of Alabama, was awarded the grant by the Foundation for Childhood Cancer Research (Rally) and Vs. Cancer Foundation.

Dr. Friedman's work has been supported by a previous Rally Foundation grant which has helped him make progress in the fight against medulloblastoma, the most common malignant pediatric brain tumor and a leading cause of cancer-related death.

"While survival rates have improved, a significant number of patients have poor outcomes despite surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy, which are all damaging to the developing brain," Dr. Friedman said. "With this grant we are focusing on the development and clinical application of genetically altered viruses which kill cancer cells while sparing normal brain cells."

Dr. Friedman said this therapy has proven safe in several adult clinical trials at UAB and his goal is to bring this new therapy to clinical use in children with brain tumors.

Rally, through volunteer-based initiatives, is dedicated to raising awareness and funds specifically for childhood cancer research to find better treatments with fewer long-term side effects and ultimately cures. In eight years, Rally has provided more than \$5 million in childhood cancer research grants across the country. Rally has been awarded the Independent Charities Seal of Excellence by meeting the highest standards of public accountability, program effectiveness and cost effectiveness. Of the one million independent charities in the United States, fewer than 2,000 have been presented with this seal.

The Vs. Cancer Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving kids' lives by empowering athletes and communities to fund lifesaving childhood cancer efforts.

Dr. Friedman provides care to pediatric cancer patients at The Alabama Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders, a partnership between UAB, Children's of Alabama and the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center. Children's of Alabama is the 10th busiest pediatric medical center in the United States. The Alabama Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders at Children's of Alabama is the state's only comprehensive center for pediatric cancer and other blood disorders, treating 90 percent of all such patients diagnosed in Alabama. Specialized pediatric services exist for all forms of childhood cancer, leukemia, brain and spinal cord tumors, hemophilia and other bleeding disorders and sickle cell diseases in the state. The center is a partnership between Children's and University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Division of Pediatric Hematology – Oncology. The ACCCBD is home to the only

pediatric programs in blood and marrow transplantation, childhood cancer survivorship, developmental cancer therapeutics, pediatric neuro-oncology, pediatric hemophilia and sickle cell disease in the state of Alabama. The cancer program is ranked among the best in the nation by US News & World Report. More information is available at www.childrensal.org/cancer.

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