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Area Cancer Researchers Present Findings at International Conference

American Association for Cancer Research also Elects CINJ Basic Science Leader to Board of Directors

New Brunswick, N.J, May 2, 2007 – Several distinguished basic and clinical researchers from The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) recently showcased advances in laboratory, clinical and translational research at the annual American Association for Cancer Research conference in Los Angeles, California.

CINJ Interim Director, Joseph R. Bertino, M.D. and University Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pharmacology, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School discussed the topic of drug resistance regarding taxanes, antimetabolites and platins, as well as that of the latest advances in pharmacology. The latter focused on uptake studies with Aplidin, which is a marine depsipeptide under clinical development. The findings were presented during a poster session with colleague Debabrata Banerjee Ph.D., Member of CINJ and Associate Professor of Medicine UMDNJ-RWJMS.

Also presenting was Eric H. Rubin, M.D., Associate Director for Clinical Science at CINJ and Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology at UMDNJ-RWJMS. Rubin also discussed drug resistance along with new insights regarding HDAC inhibitors and cell signaling. The latter focused on a proteomic study of sumoylation substrates implicating TOPORS as an E3 ligase for chromatin-modifying proteins, including mammalian SIN3A.

Edmund Lattime, Ph.D., Associate Director for Education and Training at CINJ and Professor of Surgery at UMDNJ-RWJMS, discussed tumor-induced immune suppression during a minisymposium at the conference. Specifically outlined was the modulation of tumor antigen specific to regulatory T cells in combination with systemic vaccination to produce tumor regression.

Jin-Ming Yang, Ph.D., Member of CINJ and Associate Professor of Pharmacology at

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UMDNJ-RWJMS, also discussed drug resistance as well as autophagy and drug response. The former involved discussion of the reversal of stathmin-mediated resistance to antimicrotubule agents in human breast carcinoma cells by targeting wee-1.

During a poster session, Kathleen Scotto, Ph.D., CINJ Member and Senior Associate Dean of Research at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School discussed the characterization of tumor cell response to the novel anti-tumor agent Zalypsis, while focusing on the mechanisms of drug resistance during a minisymposium. The latter involved discussion of MDR1 transcriptional activation.

Another CINJ colleague, Eileen White, Ph.D., Associate Director for Basic Science, Member and Program Leader for Molecular Mechanisms of Tumor Growth at CINJ; Adjunct Professor in the Department of Surgery at UMDNJ-RWJMS; and Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at Rutgers University; was elected to serve a three-year term on the AACR Board of Directors.

“The high-standard of work promoted by the AACR is the kind of excellence I strive for every day in my own lab,” said White. “It will be my privilege to serve this group and continue to foster the sharing of laboratory, clinical and translational research, for it is these pillars which will lead to answers on how to prevent and cure cancer.”

White received her B. S. degree at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and her Ph.D. degree at SUNY Stony Brook. She then was a Damon Runyon-Walter Winchell postdoctoral fellow at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory with Bruce Stillman, and a Staff Investigator at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, before moving to Rutgers University.

While at the conference, White chaired the Stanley J. Korsmeyer Memorial Symposium: “Apoptotic and Non-Apoptotic Cell Death in Cancer,” where she also spoke on her work describing the role of apoptosis and autophagy in cancer. Apoptosis is a cell suicide mechanism, and White’s research has found ways to turn on apoptosis in cancer cells to kill them. White also described autophagy as a process where cancer cells digest themselves as a means to survive starvation, and they are currently exploring therapeutic means to inhibit autophagy to starve cancer cells to death.

Membership in the AACR surpasses 24,000, including basic, translational, and clinical researchers, healthcare professionals, and patient advocates and cancer survivors in the United States and abroad. Founded in 1907, the AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise from the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer through high-quality scientific and educational programs, communications, and funding meritorious research projects.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state’s first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention,

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detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospitals: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Atlantic Health (Morristown Memorial Hospital, Overlook Hospital). Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital,* Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Mountainside Hospital, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

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