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**SOHN CONFERENCE FOUNDATION GRANT SUPPORTS GROUNDBREAKING  
NEUROBLASTOMA CLINICAL TRIAL AT HACKENSACK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER**

*Research Focused on Preventing Disease Relapse of High Risk Childhood Cancer*

New York, NY – February 28, 2017 – The Sohn Conference Foundation today announced the expansion of a Phase 2 cutting-edge pediatric clinical trial from the Neuroblastoma and Medulloblastoma Translational Research Consortium (NMTRC) to the Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center (HackensackUMC) in Hackensack, NJ. With the goal of preventing relapse in children with neuroblastoma in remission using a new, oral investigational drug, difluoromethylornithine (DFMO), which is used to treat African sleeping sickness. HackensackUMC will join the trial led by the Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital, which is demonstrating unprecedented rates of relapse prevention.

“We have seen a dramatic decrease in relapse in our high risk neuroblastoma patients,” said Dr. Giselle Sholler, Chair of the NMTRC and Director of Pediatric Oncology Research at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital. “We believe that by using DFMO to target an important cancer stem cell pathway to ‘turn cells off,’ we may prevent children from relapsing. Cancer cells have pathways that drive the cancer to grow and DFMO targets a specific pathway to turn these cells off.”

Neuroblastoma is a cancer of the sympathetic nervous system that typically manifests when children are very young, with the average age at diagnosis being 18 months. Neuroblastoma relapses are particularly devastating – more than 35 percent of patients with neuroblastoma will relapse, at which point the survival rate is less than 10 percent.

The HackensackUMC trial, which is being managed by Derek Hanson, M.D., pediatric neuro-oncologist, Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital at HackensackUMC aims to prevent relapse of neuroblastoma through a twice-daily regimen of DFMO.

“As part of our commitment to support initiatives to cure and treat pediatric cancer, we seek to back the most innovative projects that can make a huge impact on children’s health,” said Douglas Hirsch, Co-Chair of the Sohn Conference Foundation. “Neuroblastoma is the most common extracranial tumor in children, and Dr. Hanson’s trial is an encouraging venture towards preventing the relapse of this high-risk disease.”

“We are incredibly thankful for the support of the Sohn Conference Foundation which allows our research to reach NJ children,” said Dr. Hanson. “At the Children’s Cancer Institute at HackensackUMC, we are committed to finding the most cutting-edge treatments for children battling cancer and empower them with every option to fight back. We are encouraged by the trial’s promising initial results

at other sites, and are hopeful this will make a difference in the lives of families in New Jersey facing this difficult childhood cancer.”

With this grant from the Sohn Conference Foundation, HackensackUMC becomes the first research site in the state to study DFMO as a potential treatment to prevent the relapse of neuroblastoma in children, joining 26 other research sites throughout the country.

Since its inception in 1995, the Sohn Conference Foundation has raised more than \$75 million through its world-renowned Sohn Investment Conferences to fund research and treatment in the fight against pediatric cancer and other childhood diseases. More information on the Sohn Conference Foundation can be found at [www.sohnconference.org](http://www.sohnconference.org).

#### **ABOUT THE SOHN CONFERENCE FOUNDATION**

The Sohn Conference Foundation is dedicated to the treatment and cure of pediatric cancer and other childhood diseases. The Foundation supports cutting-edge medical research, state-of-the-art research equipment, and innovative programs to ensure that children with cancer survive and thrive. The Foundation raises its funds through premier investment conferences and special events, including its renowned annual New York Sohn Investment Conference.

Founded in 1995, the Conference honors the memory of Ira Sohn, a Wall Street professional who lost his battle with cancer at age 29. The Foundation has expanded its reach to include Sohn Australia Conference, Sohn Canada Conference, Sohn Hong Kong Conference, Sohn India Conference, Sohn London Conference, Sohn San Francisco Conference and Sohn Tel Aviv Conference. To date, the Foundation has raised more than \$75 million. More information on the Sohn Conference Foundation can be found here: [www.sohnconference.org](http://www.sohnconference.org).

#### **ABOUT THE NMTRC**

The Neuroblastoma and Medulloblastoma Translational Research Consortium (NMTRC) is a group of 25 universities and children’s hospitals headquartered at the Helen Devos Children’s Hospital that offer a nationwide network of childhood cancer clinical trials. These trials are based on the research from a group of closely collaborating investigators who are linked with laboratory programs developing novel therapies for high-risk neuroblastoma and medulloblastoma. The NMTRC’s mission is to create a national collaborative effort of researchers, oncologists and family advocates to bring forward new therapies for children with relapsed neuroblastoma and medulloblastoma with the goal of improving the quality of life and survival of children with neuroblastoma and medulloblastoma. For more information, visit: [www.nmtrc.org](http://www.nmtrc.org). Follow NMTRC on Facebook and Twitter @NMTRC.

#### **ABOUT HACKENSACK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER**

HackensackUMC, a 775-bed nonprofit teaching and research hospital located in Bergen County, NJ, is the largest provider of inpatient and outpatient services in the state. Founded in 1888 as the county’s first hospital, it is a part of the Hackensack Meridian Health family, one of the largest networks in the state comprised of 28,000 team members and more than 6,000 physicians. HackensackUMC was listed as the number one hospital in New Jersey in U.S. News & World Report’s 2016-17 Best Hospital rankings - maintaining its place atop the NJ rankings since the rating system was introduced. It was also named one of the top four New York Metro Area hospitals. HackensackUMC is one of only five major academic medical centers in the nation to receive Healthgrades America’s 50 Best Hospitals Award for five or more years in a row. The medical center is one of the top 25 green hospitals in the country according to Practice Greenhealth, and received 25 Gold Seals of Approval™ by The Joint Commission – more than

any other hospital in the country. It was the first hospital in New Jersey and second in the nation to become a Magnet® recognized hospital for nursing excellence; receiving its fifth consecutive designation in 2014. HackensackUMC has created an entire campus of award-winning care, including: the John Theurer Cancer Center; the Heart & Vascular Hospital; and the Sarkis and Siran Gabrellian Women's and Children's Pavilion, which houses the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital and Donna A. Sanzari Women's Hospital, which was designed with The Deirdre Imus Environmental Health Center and listed on the Green Guide's list of Top 10 Green Hospitals in the U.S. HackensackUMC is the Hometown Hospital of the New York Giants and the New York Red Bulls and is the Official Medical Services Provider to The Northern Trust PGA Golf Tournament. It remains committed to its community through fundraising and community events especially the Tackle Kids Cancer Campaign providing much needed research at the Children's Cancer Institute housed at the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital. To learn more, visit [www.HackensackUMC.org](http://www.HackensackUMC.org).

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