

UW Carbone Cancer Center: Researchers win two national prostate cancer awards

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MADISON, Wis. – UW-Carbone Cancer Center researchers won two of the six national Challenge Awards announced this week by the Prostate Cancer Foundation and the Movember Foundation.

Each of the six awards is \$1 million for a multi-year project for a team effort that includes a young investigator.

Dr. Joshua Lang, assistant professor of medicine, will lead a clinical trial using an antibody drug to target TROP-2, a protein highly expressed on prostate cancer cells. His team includes Dr. Howard Scher, of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; Dr. Scott Dehm, of Masonic Cancer Center at the University of Minnesota; and Dr. Scott Tagawa, of Weill Cornell Medicine and New York-Presbyterian and Dr. Kimberly Ku, Hematology/Oncology Fellow at the University of Wisconsin.

“It’s incredibly exciting to receive this award and what an honor for UW Carbone to win two of the awards out of the 92 proposals submitted,” says Lang, a medical oncologist who specializes in prostate cancer.

Dr. Douglas McNeel, professor of medicine, will use his grant to support a clinical trial that takes a “DNA vaccine” approach to teach the patient’s immune system to attack prostate cancer cells when they return in the metastatic stage of the disease. The trial will build on data from Dr. McNeel’s laboratory and a previous clinical trial funded by the Prostate Cancer Foundation and Madison Vaccines, Inc.,

demonstrating that PD-1 inhibitor drugs can make therapeutic cancer vaccines work better. The current trial will determine whether this approach will be more effective by using two prostate cancer vaccines.

McNeel's all-Carbone team includes Dr. Glenn Liu, professor of medicine; Dr. Robert Jeraj, professor of medical physics, and Dr. Christos Kyriakopoulos, assistant professor of medicine.

McNeel's project was selected as the 2017 Movember Foundation-Distinguished Gentleman's Ride Challenge Award.

"I'm very grateful to Movember and the Prostate Cancer Foundation for helping us expand this very exciting work," McNeel says.