



September 20, 2016

Dear Scott & Aileen;

Thank you! It's been 12 great years being part of your charitable group starting at Camp Riverbend in Warren and peddling through beautiful countryside in Bedminster, Basking Ridge, Bridgewater, Three Bridges, Raritan, Ringoes, Branchburg, and back to Warren raising nearly 2 million dollars for cancer research en route. You've put together a fantastic group of riders, sponsors, volunteers and supporters. The physicians, nurses, researchers and, most importantly, the patients at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey thank you!

In the last year, *Century for the Cure* has funded 3 major research projects, including a brand new initiative focusing on finding novel ways to stimulate immune cells to recognize and kill cancer cells. The *Century for the Cure* Fellowship in Translational Immunology continues to support a different form of immune research studying the activity of a special type of immune cell called a "natural killer" cell. We also have initiated the *Joseph R. Bertino Research Award* in honor of the prolific ongoing career of Dr. Joseph Bertino, a colleague of ours working at Rutgers Cancer Institute New Jersey. Dr. Bertino is an internationally renowned lead cancer researcher for over 50 years! After very short deliberation, we were honored that Dr. Bertino, who currently supervises an active research lab, agreed to be the first awardee of the grant we named after him! For those with historical interest, please note that Dr. Bertino developed and tested one of the earliest combinations of chemotherapy agents that cured patients with lymphoma. He is a world leader in pharmacology, cancer biology, metabolism and new drug development. Most recently, he is also working with Dr. Rajat Bannerji of our clinical research group in Hematologic Malignancies to develop and test a new drug combination for patients with a particularly aggressive form of lymphoma often resistant to standard chemotherapy.

Funding from *Century for the Cure* also is supporting a brand new initiative in patient communication. When the Cancer Institute of New Jersey became part of Rutgers University, several new opportunities for research emerged. We began working with colleagues at Rutgers School of Communication & Information to develop a personalized web-based patient information portal that supports individualized patient education, medical decision-making and informed consent. The striking thing about this tool is that it translates published data and data from national/international registries into personalized data applicable for individual patients based upon their specific personal and disease characteristics.

We are also happy to thank you for prior support that has led to the publication of the results of a recent clinical trial we completed. In that trial we tested using an inexpensive anti-inflammatory medication as part of cancer

treatment. The study involved 30 patients and showed that we could change the way the cancer cells behaved if we gave the patients the anti-inflammatory agent during standard chemotherapy. The preliminary data motivating the study was funded by *Century for the Cure*. After the initial results, we received national competitive peer-review funding from the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of America.

Century for the Cure is also funding other clinical trials that directly impact the lives of patients. I am happy to discuss these with you and your fantastic team of riders, volunteers, sponsors and supporters at any time. We anticipate more than 50 patients will be treated as part of these new clinical trials in the next 2 years.

In summary, my colleagues and I are excited about going to work at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. You no longer need to be old to see dramatic improvements in cancer care. They are happening very rapidly. Immune therapy, cellular therapy, gene therapy, transplant therapy, therapy targeting specific mutations, and personalized medicine are part of the routine vernacular of state-of-the-art cancer care. Clues that go back 100 years can be investigated now with the amazing technical tools of today. Samples of blood saved from children born without an immune system in the 1960's have analyzed molecularly leading to the development of new drugs that are life-changers for many patients with some types of lymphoma. Patients overall are living longer healthier lives with many more therapeutic options and more patients being cured.

Your outstanding efforts over 12 years are greatly appreciated. No one can quantify the value of hope and what it means to all stakeholders in the cancer domain. There are so many areas to explore and the more philanthropy available, the better the lives of our patients. We have our friends, people like you and your team of riders, volunteers, supporters and sponsors, to thank for that. Be well – and see you at the starting line in 2017! Can't wait!!!

Sincerely,

Roger Strair

Roger Strair, MD, PhD
Twelve year rider and
Last Place Finisher, 2005, 2016 and some of the years in-between
Century for the Cure, and
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