

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Position Paper
Increased Funding for the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences

LLS is the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer. Each year, over 140,000 Americans are newly diagnosed with blood cancers, accounting for nearly 10 percent of all newly diagnosed cancers in the United States. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world and provides free information and support services. The mission of LLS is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Treating cancer involves accessing a complex and extensive set of health care services including chemotherapy and prescription drugs, among others. LLS is committed to ensuring access to and compliance with the most appropriate, evidence-based treatments for all blood cancer patients.

LLS supports efforts to increase funding for the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) in order to accelerate the development of new therapies so that blood cancer patients have more timely access to precision medicines.

The Learning Collaborative

In May of 2011, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) entered into a collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the University of Kansas Medical Center (KU), forming *The Learning Collaborative*. The goal of this public-private partnership is to bring together drug discovery and drug development expertise and funds from multiple sources, to translate basic discoveries into blood cancer therapies. The model is scalable to support a portfolio of projects, is applicable across multiple disease areas, and is replicable by organizations with a commitment to collaboration.

Through *The Learning Collaborative*, investigators at the NIH discovered that Auranofin, an existing drug approved for arthritis, could be “repurposed” for patients with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). Clinical trials of Auranofin in CLL patients are now underway.

Through funding and support for *The Learning Collaborative*, specialists are currently working on other exciting projects:

- Repurposing an antifungal agent (CPX) as a treatment for patients with acute myeloid leukemia (AML). Now in clinical trials for blood cancer patients, laboratory tests showed that the agent could be effective against leukemia cells as well as fungal infections.
- Developing new drugs for patients with a wide variety of blood cancers who have not responded to current treatment options.

LLS urges Congress to increase funding for this vital agency, to promote innovative new discoveries in medicine, and ensure that patients are able to access these therapies sooner.

For more information on LLS' position, please contact Emily Shetty, Senior Director of Legislative Affairs at Emily.Shetty@lls.org.