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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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For the past seven years, the [Geoffrey Beene Cancer Research Center](#) (GBCRC) at Memorial Sloan Kettering has been giving investigators direct support to explore new and revolutionary ideas through a progressive model of funding. To date, the Geoffrey Beene Foundation and Geoffrey Beene, LLC, have awarded a total of \$132 million to this collaborative research center, which brings together investigators from the [Sloan Kettering Institute's Cancer Biology and Genetics Program](#) and the [Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program](#).

"The Geoffrey Beene Center takes a new approach to modern cancer research with the ultimate goal of translating basic discoveries into new ways to think about treating cancer," says GBCRC Chair [Scott W. Lowe](#), who is a member of the Cancer Biology and Genetics Program and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator.

The approach places strong emphasis on promoting the exploration of innovative ideas almost immediately after they are conceived, Dr. Lowe notes.

"The Geoffrey Beene Center actually funds ideas," affirms [Andrea Ventura](#), a cancer biologist and incumbent of one of the GBCRC's current [Junior Faculty Chairs](#). "They don't ask for lots of preliminary results, and this allows us to test new ideas and new hypotheses that otherwise would be very difficult for us to probe."

The Geoffrey Beene Center also fosters dialogue and collaboration between scientists – for example, by hosting annual retreats and seminars and interactive lab meetings – and helps young researchers and students achieve their goals during the critical, early stages of their careers. "You can think of it as seed funding that really helps us get off the ground to then go on and get longer-term sources of funding," explains cancer researcher Johanna Joyce, whose laboratory has benefited from GBCRC support in multiple ways.

In addition, the Geoffrey Beene Center supports an advanced research infrastructure, offering its investigators the best equipment and expertise available.

"Right now, the biological aspect of cancer research is very slow," Dr. Lowe observes. "We are able to sequence the genome now in a day, but we can't do the experiments to interpret what genetic changes mean [fast enough]. The support of [core facilities] and multidisciplinary teams allows us to really go after what this information might mean very quickly – and have the teams of translational researchers here capitalize on that result right away."

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