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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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FOR THE MEDIA

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, along with five other elite academic institutions, will share an unprecedented total of \$540 million in new financial support from Ludwig Cancer Research, on behalf of its founder Daniel K. Ludwig. Announced today, the gift is among the largest publicly recorded gifts to cancer research made by a private organization, bringing the total funding to date for Ludwig Centers and endowed professorships at the six institutions to \$900 million. The total new gift received by Memorial Sloan Kettering is \$90 million. Ludwig's global contribution to advancing cancer research now reaches \$2.5 billion.

"This amazing gift will enable outstanding basic and translational scientists at the [Ludwig Center for Cancer Immunotherapy](#) at Memorial Sloan Kettering to engage in high-risk, high-impact, cutting-edge research at the intersection of immunology, cancer biology, and clinical oncology. It will also help attract the best and the brightest new scientists and clinicians to the field of tumor immunology and translate basic discoveries of mechanisms governing the immune system to revolutionary cancer immunotherapies," said [Alexander Rudensky, PhD](#), Director of the Ludwig Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering.

The Ludwig Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering focuses on harnessing the power of the immune system to fight cancer. Ludwig's initial gift in 2006 allowed Memorial Sloan Kettering to establish a state-of-the-art collaborative research center devoted to immune-system-based therapies, an approach showing great promise in the treatment of cancer and other diseases. Led by some of the world's top experts in the field, the Ludwig Center for Cancer Immunotherapy is accelerating the pace at which researchers can move findings of basic science studies into translational work, so that innovative therapies and diagnostic approaches can be evaluated in people with cancer.

Research conducted by researchers at the Ludwig Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering has generated several exciting protocols that have progressed to pivotal phase III trials. One trial contributed to the development of ipilimumab (Yervoy™), the first drug shown to help patients with advanced [melanoma](#) live longer. Another resulted in the licensure of ONCEPT™ — the first and only therapeutic vaccine approved by the US Department of Agriculture for the treatment of canine melanoma — which has been shown to extend the survival of dogs with advanced stages of the disease.

For Journalists

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More recently, Ludwig Cancer Research has supported a state-of-the-art [Immune Monitoring Core Facility](#), which allows researchers to measure the impact of new immunologic therapies in patients enrolled in clinical trials at Memorial Sloan Kettering, as well as at collaborating sites all over the world.

The gift from Ludwig Cancer Research builds on a long and distinguished history at Memorial Sloan Kettering in the field of tumor immunology. The late Lloyd J. Old, who served as Associate Director of Research at Memorial Sloan Kettering, is widely regarded as the founder of modern tumor immunology and headed the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research for 17 years. During his more than 50-year-long career at Memorial Sloan Kettering, Dr. Old made seminal discoveries about the immune system and how it is able to detect and kill cancer cells. Among his discoveries were cell-surface markers, which enable the immune system to identify cancer cells, and helper and killer T cells, which allow the immune system to destroy infectious agents as well as tumor cells.

"The extraordinarily generous gift from Ludwig Cancer Research will have a transformative impact on the

Ludwig Center for Cancer Immunotherapy at Memorial Sloan Kettering,” said [Jedd Wolchok, MD, PhD](#), a medical oncologist, immunologist, and Associate Director of the Ludwig Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering and Director of the Swim Across America/Ludwig Collaborative Research Laboratory. “Not only will it allow us to expand our state-of-the-art immune monitoring facility, but will also permit us to catalyze the field by providing funding for novel clinical trials that seek to clinically exploit the most important scientific discoveries in the area of cancer immunology. The gift will certainly help us to continue our quest to find the most potent and precise means to use the patient’s own immune system as a means of durably controlling a broad spectrum of cancers,” said Dr. Wolchok.

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