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## **National Brain Tumor Society & Oligo Nation Announce Funding for Immunotherapy-Based Approach to Oligodendroglioma Treatment**

*Joint funding effort will provide \$250,000 for development of anti-CD47 immunotherapy at Stanford University School of Medicine*

**BOSTON, MA** – [National Brain Tumor Society](#) (NBTS), the the largest nonprofit organization in the U.S. dedicated to the brain tumor community, together with [Oligo Nation](#), a community-driven non-profit dedicated to funding translational oligodendroglioma research, today announced \$250,000 in grant-funding for a preclinical research study of an immunotherapeutic approach to oligodendroglioma treatment.

The funded project, titled “Anti-CD47 Based Multimodality Immunotherapy Against Malignant Oligodendroglioma,” will be conducted by a team at Stanford University School of Medicine and led by grantee Samuel Cheshier, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery.

This research builds on over 20 years of work at Stanford which established that a cell protein called CD47 acts as a “don’t eat me” signal to immune cells, thus cloaking tumors from the body’s innate immune system. CD47 is highly expressed on many human cancers, including oligodendrogliomas. Stanford has developed an antibody that blocks the “don’t eat me” function, thereby allowing immune cells (macrophages) to identify and devour the cancer cells.

This cutting edge approach is already in Phase I clinical trials for a number of solid tumors and blood cancers at Stanford, and this project will establish whether oligodendroglioma can benefit clinically from anti-CD47 treatment, which *in vitro* testing indicates it could. To do so, researchers led by Dr. Cheshier will work through three approaches:

1. Building on successful *in vitro* studies of anti-CD47 in oligodendroglioma, Cheshier’s team will now test anti-CD47 *in vivo* using multiple animal models.
  - Successful *in vivo* studies are necessary to add oligodendroglioma to the brain cancer arm of the **anti-CD47 clinical trials at Stanford, scheduled to begin in early 2017**.
2. Testing, *in vivo*, their anti-CD47 antibody in combination with a multiple agents, including anti-CD40 agents and EGFR inhibitors. The hypothesis is that combining their anti-CD47 antibody with other innate immunotherapeutic agents may increase the patients’ response to the therapy.
  - Successful results from these studies would allow for a Phase II clinical trails of these combinations once an anti-CD47 monotherapy Phase II trial is completed.
3. Testing, *in vivo*, the effectiveness of combining anti-CD47 therapy with immunotherapies that stimulate an adaptive immune response, including checkpoint inhibitors (PD-1, PDL-1, and CTLA-4). The hope is by combining innate and adaptive immune responses, a stronger anti-tumor effect is created.

Funding for the grants is being provided equally through the NBTS’ [Oligodendroglioma Research Fund](#) and [Oligo Nation](#). Both organizations have benefited from their many committed supporters. A special recognition is owed to the Dabbiere family for their commitment and generosity.

“This grant represents hope for families living with Oligo *today*,” according to Brock Greene, the founder of Oligo Nation and the father of two sons with oligodendroglioma tumors. “This research is designed to help the current generation of Oligo patients—not patients that will be diagnosed in 5 or 10 years—with a clinical trial anticipated within 18 months. We are purposefully leveraging a potentially important immunotherapy approach that is already on the path, hopefully, to FDA approval. The first time I met with Dr. Cheshier nine months ago, I knew anti-CD47 was an important opportunity for the Oligo community. I am excited that today we are moving forward.”

“To date, the Oligodendroglioma Research Fund has granted nearly \$2 million in research funding, across multiple projects. Immunotherapy is an important treatment strategy to pursue, and emerging results from its use in other areas of oncology demonstrate the potential this approach could have for oligodendroglioma and other brain tumor patients,” said David F. Arons, JD, Chief Executive Officer, National Brain Tumor Society. “We’re grateful for the opportunity to fund this novel research effort in collaboration Oligo Nation, and are hopeful that this project will lead to a future clinical trial and advance treatment options for oligodendroglioma patients.”

### **About Oligodendroglioma**

Pure oligodendroglioma is a relatively rare brain tumor, representing approximately 6% of gliomas. In addition, there are patients with mixed oligoastrocytomas, accounting for another 2.3% of gliomas. Together, these oligodendroglioma-based tumors account for 1,850 (or 2.7%) of new brain tumor diagnoses each year in the United States. Because of this rarity, both preclinical and clinical research efforts on this tumor type lag behind the more prevalent forms of brain tumors. Unlike many other forms of brain cancer, Oligodendroglioma affects younger age groups, with a higher percentage of cases of people diagnosed in their 20’s and 30’s. Survival rates and treatments depend on location, extent of possible surgical resection, histopathology, and molecular aggressiveness. However, this disease is currently incurable.

### **About Oligo Nation**

There have been no new treatments for oligodendroglioma in over 20 years. Oligo Nation was founded in 2014 to change this alarming fact. We are driven by the urgent need of our community for new treatments *now*. Our mission is to provide a funding mechanism for medical research that can potentially offer new treatments in the next five years. Our strategy is to capitalize on the breakthrough approaches succeeding against others cancers, but which have not been tested against Oligo, including immunology and stem cell therapies. Oligo Nation works with and supports families that want to fight back against this disease by raising money for research. In our first 18 months, Oligo Nation has raised over \$250K and expects to invest over \$300K in research this year.

### **About National Brain Tumor Society**

National Brain Tumor Society (NBTS) is the largest nonprofit organization in the U.S. dedicated to the brain tumor community. We are fiercely committed to finding better treatments and driving rapid progress toward a cure for brain tumors. We drive a multi-faceted and thoughtful approach to aggressively influence and fund strategic research, as well as advocate for public policy changes, in order to achieve the greatest impact, results, and progress for brain tumor patients. Money raised by the generous donations of our supporters has directly funded groundbreaking discoveries, programs, clinical trials and policy initiatives. NBTS is a Charity Navigator Four-Star designated nonprofit. To learn more visit [www.braintumor.org](http://www.braintumor.org)

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