

# Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota

## Masonic Cancer Center



### Masonic Cancer Center of the University of Minnesota

## University research team receives donation to study deadly pediatric brain cancer

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL (June 22, 2010)—The University of Minnesota's Brain Tumor Program received a \$50,000 donation on May 20, 2010 from The Cure Starts Now Foundation to continue research on a rare pediatric brain cancer called Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG).

Erika Hauschildt who lost her seven-year-old daughter Ella to DIPG in November 2008 and started the Minneapolis chapter of The Cure Starts Now Foundation in January 2010 presented the donation to [Christopher Moertel, M.D.](#), and [John Ohlfest, Ph.D.](#), both with the University of Minnesota's Medical School and Masonic Cancer Center. Moertel and Ohlfest will use the donation to help underwrite a phase 1 clinical trial to begin testing a vaccine they're developing for potential treatment of DIPG. They hope to launch the clinical trial before the end of 2010.

Hauschildt says, "DIPG is a rare inoperable brain stem cancer. Imagine being told that your child has cancer. Then imagine being told that there is no cure. Approximately 200 children are diagnosed in the U.S. each year, most children die within a year, there has been no improvement in treatment or survival in approximately 30 years and most families are told there is a 0-10 percent chance of survival. It's gratifying that Dr. Moertel and Ohlfest and others at the University of Minnesota are working to try to stop it from taking the lives of little children."

DIPG is a malignant tumor that begins in the tissue of the lowest part of the brain stem, which controls many vital functions. The cancer most often occurs in boys and girls between 5 and 9 years of age and accounts for about 10-15 percent of all childhood cancers of the central nervous system. The prognosis for this rapid and aggressive cancer is poor with median survival being less than one year after diagnosis.

Brooke and Keith Desserich of Cincinnati, Ohio started The Cure Starts Now Foundation in 2007 after loosing their daughter Brooke to DIPG and there are now 16 chapters across the United States and one chapter in Australia.

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[University of Minnesota pediatric brain cancer clinical trials](#)

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