

PBTF Gives \$6 million to Duke

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DURHAM, N.C. -- The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTF) is giving \$6 million to its research institute at Duke University to further the work started by a \$6 million grant it gave in 2003 to create the institute, Duke President Richard H. Brodhead and Chancellor for Health Affairs Victor J. Dzau, M.D., announced Wednesday.

PBTF co-founders Mike and Dianne Traynor presented the new grant at a reception held Wednesday at Duke's Levine Science Research Center.

"The grant to the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Institute at Duke from the foundation is very emblematic of their role in moving childhood brain tumor research forward in the United States and worldwide," said Darell Bigner, M.D., Ph.D., director of the PBTF Institute at Duke. "On behalf of Duke and on behalf of all of our childhood brain tumor patients, I want to thank the foundation for the support and the opportunity to help these children."

Researchers at the PBTF Institute at Duke will use the funds to continue their study of pediatric brain tumors, which are the leading cause of cancer death in children and adolescents. Four out of ten children with brain tumors die within five years of diagnosis.

Since Duke received the initial \$6 million grant five years ago, PBTF-funded research at Duke has focused on projects aimed at developing gene-based therapies, vaccines and other novel treatments for common childhood brain tumors, including medulloblastomas and astrocytomas.

"Science is moving very fast now and the technology that's available today simply wasn't around even five years ago," Bigner said. "We are now able to develop new therapies that not only will be effective but won't damage the nervous systems and brains of these children. The grants from the foundation have really been the catalyst to make a lot of this work possible, not only at Duke but at the three other institutions where similar institutes are housed."

"The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Institute at Duke is the largest basic research collaborative in existence for pediatric brain tumors," said Dianne Traynor, the foundation's director of research funding and advocacy. "We are excited about the advances Duke is making and hopeful that, together with our other research institutes, they will find a cure."

Researchers at Duke share their results with their counterparts at the foundation's three other institutes, housed at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles; the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada; and the University of California, San Francisco. Since 2003, the PBTF has given a total of \$13 million to its three institutes.

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The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in Asheville, N.C., and is the world's largest non-governmental funder of childhood brain tumor research. Its programs include free educational information about brain tumors, internet conferences, college scholarships for brain tumor survivors and Ride for Kids, a charity motorcycle event and program.