Announcing the AACR Cancer Progress Report 2013

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Clinical Cancer Research (CCR) is proud to present the AACR Cancer Progress Report 2013, which is available as a print supplement to this issue of the journal. It is also freely available to all CCR subscribers and to the general public on the journal website (http://clincancerres.aacrjournals.org/) and the report website (http://www.cancerprogress-report.org).

The AACR Cancer Progress Report 2013 recounts recent research successes and provides a detailed account of some of the most important advances that were made in cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment between September 1, 2012, and July 31, 2013. It also offers a glimpse of what the future may hold. Moreover, the inspiring personal stories of the patients and survivors that are featured throughout the report are a reminder that our basic, translational, and clinical research efforts continue to make research count for patients and that more work must be done if further progress is to be made against cancer.

The report not only serves as a comprehensive educational tool but also shows why funding for the NIH and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) must again become a national priority and remain as such. It is pivotal that federal policymakers and their constituents understand that research funded by the NIH and NCI has contributed to nearly every health care advance in modern history, and that we are all enjoying longer, healthier lives thanks to the investments in these agencies by the federal government.

The report starts by reminding us that even though significant progress has been and continues to be made against cancer, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the entire biomedical research enterprise, the disease remains a major health care challenge and a huge financial burden both nationally and internationally. It goes on to provide a far-reaching overview of our current understanding of what cancer is, how it is caused, and what the potential risk factors are. As the report indicates, we have never been better positioned to capitalize on this knowledge. For example, we know that more than 50% of the 580,350 cancer-related deaths expected to occur in the United States in 2013 will be related to preventable causes such as tobacco use and obesity or overweight, illustrating that education and public policy have had and will continue to play an important role in reducing cancer-related deaths.

As described in the report, we also know that mutations in an individual’s genes drive cancer initiation, development, and metastasis, and that therapies specifically targeting the molecular defects arising from these mutations are often beneficial to patients while being less toxic than older, less-targeted therapies. This information has provided the foundation for many of the new drugs and new drug indications that received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from September 1, 2012, through August 11, 2013. Detailed in the report is the scientific foundation for these approvals and a description of how these cutting-edge medicines are already providing benefit to some patients. A special feature on the tremendous recent progress and near-term future potential of the field of cancer immunotherapy is also presented.

In addition, the report provides a window to the future, outlining just a few of the many areas of research that hold promise for future therapeutic advances against cancer. It also reminds us that how we conduct research matters, and that innovative efforts in this regard are needed if we are to become more efficient and productive researchers.

The AACR Cancer Progress Report, published annually, is a valuable resource that chronicles the ongoing progress against cancer and illustrates how important federal investments in the NIH and NCI are for transforming cancer care and bringing hope to patients and their loved ones everywhere. We feel that both the research community and the general public will find the AACR Cancer Progress Report 2013 of interest, and we invite you to explore it.

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