

Michael F. Price Memorial Grant Supports Breakthrough in Cancer Stem Cell Research – Providing Groundwork for Phase I Clinical Trial

NEW YORK, Oct. 28, 2025 –[The DeGregorio Family Foundation](#) with support from the [Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association](#) has awarded an additional \$75,000 Michael F. Price Memorial Grant to Anthony Capobianco, PhD, Professor in The DeWitt Daughtry Family Department of Surgery and the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.



This continued support recognizes the significant progress made under the original 2023 award, which demonstrated the ability to disrupt cancer stem cells (CSCs) through dual inhibition of the Notch and Wnt pathways. Building on these results, the research team will provide the groundwork to advance two novel drugs — SSTN-302 and SST-1034 — to a Phase I clinical trial in patients with advanced Upper GI cancer.

“The support from the DeGregorio Family Foundation and the Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association has been instrumental in making this next stage possible,” said Dr. Capobianco. “Our preclinical research showed that simultaneous targeting of the Notch and Wnt pathways with these drugs can eliminate cancer stem cell populations and improve treatment durability when combined with standard chemotherapy. This initial funding is critical for us to initiate the process of establishing a clinical trial.”

The Phase I trial, potentially to be conducted at the University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, will evaluate the safety and early efficacy of the combination therapy in patients with esophageal and gastrointestinal cancers — two malignancies with urgent unmet needs and limited therapeutic options.

Dr. Capobianco’s research, in collaboration with StemSynergy Therapeutics, has focused on the development of first-in-class small molecule inhibitors that target the root drivers of tumor growth, metastasis and drug resistance — the cancer stem cells themselves.



We are deeply grateful to the DeGregorio Family Foundation for its vision and commitment to supporting transformative research.
- Dr. Anthony Capobianco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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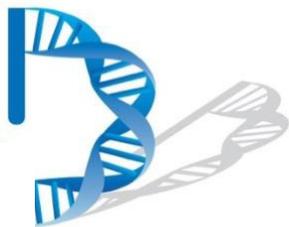


“We are deeply grateful to the DeGregorio Family Foundation for its vision and commitment to supporting transformative research,” added Dr. Capobianco. “This grant is a catalyst for transforming discovery into clinical impact for patients with Upper GI cancer.”

In 2020, gastrointestinal and esophageal cancers combined were responsible for more than 1.3 million deaths worldwide. Despite advances in treatment, these cancers continue to carry poor prognoses due to their chemo-resistant behavior and ability to metastasize. By targeting the cancer stem cells that drive these properties, Dr. Capobianco’s team aims to fundamentally change the outlook for patients with these devastating diseases, by providing greater efficacy, reducing the burden of therapy and achieving a more durable therapeutic response.

“We are excited to support this next step in Dr. Capobianco’s research as it moves closer to the clinic,” concluded Lynn DeGregorio, President and Founder of the DeGregorio Family Foundation.

The DeGregorio Family Foundation, founded in 2006 after a 10th member of the DeGregorio family died of stomach cancer, has raised more than \$13 million to fund innovative research to cure gastric and esophageal cancers. It is the only public foundation focused on funding research grants for both of these cancers.



The DeGregorio Family Foundation funds innovative research focused on curing gastric and esophageal cancers—[click here to donate](#) and...

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