

\$500,000 Michael F. Price Grant Awarded to MD Anderson for Gastric Cancer Clinical Trial

NEW YORK, Nov. 18, 2025 – [The DeGregorio Family Foundation](#) with support from the Torrey Coast Foundation has awarded a \$500,000 Michael F. Price Memorial Grant to Katy Rezvani, MD, PhD, Vice President, Institute for Cell Therapy Discovery & Innovation at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Dr. Rezvani, Dr. Brian Badgwell, Professor of Surgical Oncology at MD Anderson, and their research teams are launching an innovative clinical trial aimed at improving outcomes for patients with stage IV gastric cancer that has spread to the peritoneum, the lining of the abdomen. Peritoneal cancer can cause problems like bowel obstruction and fluid buildup, and chemotherapy may not reach this area as well as other sites. Surgery and removal of the stomach is the only known cure for gastric cancer, but it isn't clearly known if this approach works for stage IV gastric cancer.

This trial combines three powerful strategies: surgical removal of tumors, direct delivery of chemotherapy into the peritoneal cavity and a next-generation immunotherapy using engineered natural killer (NK) cells.

NK cells are part of the body's immune system and are known for their ability to attack abnormal cells. In this trial, they are enhanced in three key ways: they're equipped with a receptor to target a protein called TROP2 found on gastric cancer cells, boosted with IL-15 to help them survive longer and modified to resist suppression from the tumor environment. These upgrades are designed to help the NK cells stay active and effective in the challenging conditions inside the abdomen.

In addition to treatment, the research team will study tissue samples to uncover new therapeutic targets and identify which patients are most likely to benefit from this aggressive approach. By combining surgery, localized chemotherapy and advanced cell therapy, they hope to significantly improve survival and expand treatment options for patients facing this difficult form of cancer



We're truly grateful for the \$500K award toward our project. It will be instrumental in advancing our clinical trial.

- Dr. Katy Rezvani

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“We thank the DeGregorio Family Foundation very much for its generous support,” said Dr. Rezvani. “We’re truly grateful for the \$500K award toward our project. It will be instrumental in advancing our clinical trial.”

We are honored to support the first in-human trial for an off the shelf, cord blood (CB)-derived natural killer (NK) cell therapy engineered with a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) for patients with gastric cancer peritoneal metastases,” concluded Lynn DeGregorio, President and Founder of the DeGregorio Family Foundation.

In 2020, gastric and esophageal cancers combined killed over 1.3 million people worldwide. Patients continue to face poor prognoses following gastric and esophageal cancer diagnoses due to their chemo-resistant behavior and ability to metastasize.

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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