



A letter from Dr. Conway of Ochsner Health System on the research taking place that has in part been supported by the Shirley P. and James Wray Bush Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Fund, which was the benefactor of the 2013 Purple Pants Party:

I am writing to update you on a few of the exciting initiatives in the pancreatic cancer program at Ochsner, supported by the Shirley P. and James Wray Bush Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Fund.

In the basic science arena, we are continuing to partner with a PhD at Louisiana State University to look at an intracellular pancreatic cancer pathway that appears to play a role in tumor growth and invasion. We are currently writing a manuscript detailing the findings of our analysis of a large number of pancreatic cancer samples, which lead us to the LRP-6 pathway and how it was upregulated differently, based on the tumor's ability to spread to lymph nodes. This pathway may be vital to this process. We are now working to develop an animal model where we will block this pathway and see if we can prevent cancer cells from spreading outside the pancreas to lymph nodes or other organs.

In the clinical science arena, we continue to provide clinical trials for our pancreatic cancer patients. This includes adjuvant trials, looking at various chemotherapeutic options for patients that have had their tumor surgically removed, including the vaccine trial that we continue to have available. Ochsner was also recently chosen as a site for a trial for borderline resectable pancreatic cancer patients, sponsored by the Alliance for Clinical Trials group. This group of patients has tumors that are localized to the pancreas, but are invading important blood vessels that travel through the pancreas. We are one of only 12 sites in the entire United States that was chosen to participate. This trial requires extensive surgical skill in cancer resections that involve complex



vascular reconstructions; Dr. Bolton and I have extensive experience with these procedures.

From a surgical perspective, I recently performed the first totally robotic whipple procedure in the State of Louisiana. This exciting development highlights our commitment to finding ways to minimize the negative effects on patients that often accompany this complex operation. We are hoping that by doing the operation in a minimally invasive fashion (similar to how patients have their gallbladder removed) we can reduce post-operative pain and shorten the recovery period. We are also continuing to develop our overall comprehensive program, and have started a pre-operative initiative to thoroughly educate patients on their disease and upcoming treatment options, with the hope of alleviating anxiety and improving patient outcomes. This patient education and mental preparedness project is something I am very excited about and hope that our future patients will benefit from considerably.

There is no question that all of these initiatives would not be possible without your generous support. With your help, we are growing and developing a patient-centered, world class pancreatic cancer treatment program. I hope you are proud of all you have made possible for those who suffer with pancreatic cancer. I am most grateful for your continued support of my research efforts and hope you will continue to help Ochsner grow the Shirley P. and James Wray Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Fund.