**Project Purple to donate $1.25 Million to NYU Langone Pancreatic Cancer Center**

*The Seymour nonprofit hopes to help establish the first-ever center for the early detection of pancreatic cancer*

Project Purple, a Seymour-based nonprofit that raises money for pancreatic cancer research and patient financial aid, is hoping to contribute to an important step in improving pancreatic cancer survival rates.

The team is donating $1.25 million to Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center at NYU Langone to establish a dedicated center focused on the early detection and treatment of pancreatic cancer. The center will be the first of its kind.

“Our goal is to find a cure and give some of the top clinicians the means and money to do so,” Project Purple founder and CEO Dino Verrelli said. “This project is in line with our mission to create a world without pancreatic cancer.”

The world-renowned surgeon and researcher Dr. Diane Simeone, MD, will lead the project, which will unite an internationally-based team that will focus on improving the identification of high-risk patients, lead national clinical research efforts to validate an early detection blood test, and develop prevention strategies for high-risk individuals.

“Early detection and prevention presents real opportunities for making progress against pancreatic cancer,” states Dr. Simeone, director of the pancreatic cancer center at Perlmutter Cancer Center.  “We’re excited to partner with Project Purple on this work. We have strong data showing that finding cancer at an early stage has a marked effect on survival. Perlmutter Cancer Center is both developing new ways to detect pancreatic cancer, and establishing new screening and treatment paradigms for individuals and families at high risk of developing the disease.”

“Dr. Simeone is one of the top clinicians in the role for pancreatic disease,” Verrelli said, “And Project Purple is excited to be partnering with her team at NYU Langone to move the science in finding a cure.”

 “Improving pancreatic cancer outcomes is among our top priorities at Perlmutter Cancer Center,” cites Dr. Benjamin Neel, director of Perlmutter Cancer Center. “We’re grateful for the generosity of Project Purple, and for its commitment to funding research to improve patient outcomes.”

Pancreatic cancer has killed over 1 million people since 1996 and it is on pace to become the second highest cause of all cancer-related deaths by 2020. At the moment, there is no cure and no consistent early detection method for the disease.

Today, the average survival rate of pancreatic cancer is 9%. This is largely because how difficult it can be to diagnose the disease and how late the disease is typically diagnosed.

However, if pancreatic cancer is discovered at an early enough stage, surgery can be conducted to remove the tumor. According to the American Cancer Society, the survival rate for pancreatic cancer is 32% for patients who are able to have their tumors surgically removed.

The development of consistent early detection methods would improve the likelihood of survival for many pancreatic cancer patients, and that is why NYU Langone proposed the development of the Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection and Prevention Center.

According to NYU Langone’s project proposal, the center will be the coordinating hub for a network of regional, national, and international partners from industry and academia, organized to enroll participants in pancreatic cancer early detection and prevention studies while gathering biosamples for research.

Project Purple CEO Dino Verrelli is excited about the potential impact of this project.

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