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Tom Thumb Foundation donates \$220,000 to support breast cancer research at UT Southwestern

DALLAS – Oct. 27, 2011 – The Tom Thumb Foundation has given \$220,000 to foster breast cancer research and support a groundbreaking clinical trial at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

The gift from the organization, an affiliate of the Safeway Foundation, will help support the I-SPY 2 TRIAL, designed to rapidly assess new targeted therapies for breast cancer, which claims the lives of more women in the U.S. than any other type of cancer. The trial will take place at 15 research sites across the country.

“I-SPY 2 is one of the most innovative and complex cancer clinical trials ever designed,” explained Dr. David Euhus, professor of surgery who will lead the research core at UT Southwestern. “The philanthropic support provided by the Tom Thumb Foundation has allowed us to assemble a highly qualified research team, dedicated to creating the best possible experience for our patients. The gift also will help fund the sophisticated MRI scanning that is an integral part of the trial.”

Sponsored by a program of the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, the I-SPY 2 TRIAL (Investigation of Serial Studies to Predict Your Therapeutic Response with Imaging And moLecular Analysis 2) studies women with newly diagnosed breast tumors 1 inch in diameter or larger to test whether adding investigational drugs to standard chemotherapy is better than standard chemotherapy alone before having surgery.

“Despite much progress over the years, it is clear that much more remains to be done to ensure optimal effectiveness of treatment and the ability to predict response to different therapies in an individual patient will be critical to achieving that goal,” said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, president of the medical center. “The Tom Thumb Foundation is providing critical support allowing us to pursue this goal, and we’re very excited by the opportunity to participate in this tremendously important trial.”

The trial’s treatment phase will test multiple investigational drugs that are thought to target the biology of each participant’s tumor. Researchers will then apply the information from each participant who completes the study treatment to help decide treatment for women who join the trial

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Tom Thumb gift – 2

in the future. This will help the study researchers learn more quickly which investigational drugs will be most beneficial for women with certain tumor characteristics.

“This kind of support is essential to our ability to perform at the highest levels, and we’re extremely grateful for the foundation’s great faith in our work,” Dr. Euhus said.

Connie Yates, Tom Thumb’s director of public affairs, said, “We are honored to partner with UT Southwestern on this groundbreaking research, and are grateful for the dedicated team that is working diligently to determine the very best treatment for each individual patient.”

Working in partnership with local organizations, the Safeway Foundation/Tom Thumb Foundation supports hunger relief, education, health and human services, and people with disabilities. The foundation raised more than \$16.1 million for breast cancer research in 2010, bringing its total to more than \$94 million over nine years. The Safeway Foundation/Tom Thumb Foundation directed the majority of these funds to breast cancer research programs at major U.S. and Canadian cancer research centers, including UT Southwestern Medical Center.

For more information about the I-SPY 2 TRIAL, call Barbara Staves, clinical research coordinator at UT Southwestern, at 214-648-1988.

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