

BUSINESS

Doctor discusses innovations in cancer gene therapy

Rare is the opportunity to hear first-hand from a leading scientist at the forefront of discovering new treatments for cancer. The Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), founded by local Greenwich residents Barbara and Edward Netter, is providing this opportunity to the public with a program fea-

turing Dr. Michel Sadelain, founding director of the Center for Cell Engineering and head of the Gene Transfer and Gene Expression Laboratory at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. The program will focus on advancements and promising research for cancer treatment in the areas of lymphoma, leukemia and

prostate cancer.

The presentation will be on Wednesday, April 22, at 7 p.m., at the Bruce Museum. The public is invited to this event, which is free of charge. In addition to the informal presentation, Dr. Sadelain will answer audience questions. For more information, or to reserve a seat, call Francine

Young at 358-8000 or e-mail fyong@acgtfoundation.org.

In 2008, there were an estimated 186,320 prostate cancers diagnosed, 74,340 new cases of lymphoma and 44,270 new cases of leukemia in the United States. This topic is especially relevant in today's quest to find new treatments and ultimately a cure for the many forms of cancer.

Gene therapy is an emerging science that is making progress in treating cancer. It deals with the origin of cancer — the genes. Dr. Sadelain will explain advances using immunotherapy, his clinical trials with lymphoma/leukemia, and his work with solid tumors including prostate cancer.

Dr. Sadelain received an ACGT 2004 Investigator Grant for Gene Therapy for his work on lymphoma and leukemia. His research focuses on novel approaches to enhance T cell stimulation and function. T cell engineering is a promising approach for establishing potent and durable immunity against cancer.

Dr. Sadelain's research is in clinical trials and uses engineered T cells to create an immune response against cancer cells. The research is so promising that seven other major medical centers are also initiating clinical trials on similar work in the next year. The challenge has been to modify the T cells to live in the recipient. Drug therapy only lasts for a certain time after it is put in the body, and radiation and chemotherapy damage good cells as well as the bad. The

goal of Dr. Sadelain's research is to create genetically engineered T cells that live long after the cancer is gone, go through the body and keep it healthy and cancer-free.

Since its inception in 2000, ACGT has issued close to \$20 million in research grants to 31 ACGT research fellows representing such leading research institutions as Harvard Medical School, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, May Clinic, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Duke University, The Salk Institute, University of Pennsylvania, Memorial Sloan-Kettering, University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine and the University of Chicago. Identified through a rigorous selection procedure, the scientists and their research projects address lymphoma/leukemia, prostate breast, lung, brain and ovarian cancer.