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### **Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance Distributes Record Amount of Research Funding *\$687,320 Provided to Researchers Focused on Ovarian Cancer***

(MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., May 11, 2015) The Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA) is celebrating the organization's 16<sup>th</sup> year with a research-funding milestone. MOCA announced last night that a record \$662,320 in funding for ovarian cancer research projects has been awarded to seven researchers at the Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota at MOCA's Annual Meeting in Minneapolis. Additionally, MOCA is providing \$25,000 to the national Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) Ovarian Cancer Dream Team this year.

This is the largest amount of research funding the organization has awarded at one time since its inception in 1999, putting MOCA's total research funding distribution at more than \$5 million. This makes MOCA one of the largest private, non-profit funders of ovarian cancer research funding in the nation.

MOCA also detailed the newly formed partnership with the SU2C Ovarian Cancer Dream Team, which begins research this July. The Ovarian Cancer Dream Team will research therapies that target DNA repair, as well as a new method to identify, counsel and prevent the development of ovarian cancer in women with a high genetic risk of developing it. The SU2C Dream Team is being funded for 3 years with \$6 million from the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance and the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, with contributions from organizations throughout the United States, including a \$100,000 commitment from MOCA.

MOCA funds ovarian cancer research in Minnesota through an annual competitive grant program. These grants provide opportunities for Minnesota-based researchers to initiate new studies or continue current research on ovarian cancer.

"Since the early days of MOCA, research has always been a core mission of ours. MOCA has funded more than 60 ovarian cancer research projects conducted by Minnesota researchers. These projects show MOCA's commitment to advancing ovarian cancer research, which is so necessary because there is no early detection test and limited effective treatment options for the disease," said MOCA Executive Director Kathleen Gavin. "We remain committed to funding Minnesota researchers, while at the same time are excited at the opportunity to be part of a nationwide effort bringing the country's best and brightest researchers together to work on projects targeting this too-often deadly disease."

Ovarian cancer is the fifth-leading cause of cancer death among women and is the deadliest gynecologic cancer. Nearly 400 women in Minnesota will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer this year.

Findings from MOCA-funded research projects have been published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at conferences across the country.

This year's funded projects range from research into new therapies for ovarian cancer to research that investigates the hereditary connection to ovarian cancer.

The full list of 2015 research projects include:

- **Stopping Enzyme-Catalyzed Ovarian Cancer Evolution**  
Reuben S. Harris, Ph.D. | *University of Minnesota* - \$100,000
- **Pharmacogenomics, DNA Repair and Response to Platinum and Taxanes in Epithelial Ovarian Cancer**  
Ellen L. Goode, Ph.D., M.P.H. | *Mayo Clinic* - \$97,040
- **Glycoengineered Mesenchymal Stem Cells as Theranostic Agents**  
Swayam Prabha, Ph.D., MBA | *University of Minnesota* - \$99,477
- **Targeting Platinum Resistant Ovarian Cancer via MTH1 Inhibition**  
Andrea Wahner Hendrickson, M.D. | *Mayo Clinic* - \$85,000
- **Targeting the TGF $\beta$  Signaling Pathway for Control of Metastasis & Fibrosis in Ovarian Cancer**  
William Cliby, M.D. | *Mayo Clinic* - \$80,803
- **BRCA Deficiency Drives an Enriched Sex Steroid Milieu that Supports Hereditary Ovarian Carcinogenesis**  
Carol A. Lange, Ph.D. | *University of Minnesota* - \$100,000
- **A Novel Anti-Cancer Stem Cell Drug for Treating Ovarian Cancer**  
Daniel A. Vallera, Ph.D. | *University of Minnesota* - \$100,000

The research grants were awarded at MOCA's Annual Meeting on Monday, May 11 at the Marriot Minneapolis West in Minneapolis, Minn.

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**About the Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance:** The Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness, providing education and support to women and families impacted by the disease and funding the research needed to detect ovarian cancer early and treat it properly. Since MOCA was founded in 1999, the organization to more than 1,000 survivors and 45,000 donors and active members with a full range of programs encompassing education, support and research. MOCA has awarded more than \$5 million to research projects for ovarian cancer research in Minnesota. For additional information, go to [www.mnovarian.org](http://www.mnovarian.org) or call (612) 822-0500.