

Barrow Receives Largest Grant in History To Seek Cure for Deadly Brain Cancer

\$50 Million from Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation in Partnership with Barrow Neurological Foundation to Fund Fight Against Glioblastoma

(PHOENIX – Sept. 10, 2018) – Barrow Neurological Institute has initiated a \$50 million effort, supported by the single largest research grant in the history of brain tumor



research, to seek a cure for the deadliest form of brain cancer. Funding from The Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation will be used to dramatically accelerate drug discovery and clinical testing for glioblastoma in the newly-formed [Ivy Brain Tumor Center](#) at the [Barrow Neurological Institute](#).

The Ivy Center will become a cornerstone at Barrow, which conducts more brain tumor operations than any hospital in the nation, and is part of Dignity Health [St. Joseph's](#)

Hospital and Medical Center. Already screening malignant brain tumor patients from around the world, the new Center will ultimately mean that every patient, regardless of diagnosis or state of the tumor, will have the individualized option for an experimental therapy.

“This grant will fast track discovery and offer support and hope to those battling glioblastoma and other malignant brain tumors,” says [Nader Sanai, MD](#), director of [neurosurgical oncology](#). Dr. Sanai is an internationally renowned pioneer in glioblastoma research and will head the new Center. “The formation of the Ivy Brain Tumor Center will propel our singular research strategy to a new level of personalized medicine as we put a laser focus on discovering a cure,” he said. “The Ivy Foundation’s commitment is a true gift of hope.”

Dr. Sanai added: “This is the largest brain tumor research grant in history, but glioblastoma is one of the most complex cancers and in partnership with the Barrow Neurological Foundation, we will continue to be aggressive in our fight to seek additional funding.”

[Catherine Ivy](#), president of The Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation, said the Center's ultimate goal is to cure brain cancer. "The more we discover, the more we can do to help patients and their families. Our Foundation has partnered with renowned medical and research programs throughout the United States and even internationally," she said. "After years of assessment, we have decided to invest in the Ivy Brain Tumor Center at Barrow. We think Barrow and the new Ivy Brain Tumor Center are our best bet."

More than 138,000 Americans currently are living with a malignant brain tumor and more than nine out of 10 diagnosed with glioblastoma die within five years. Market forces and a string of high-profile clinical trial failures have led pharmaceutical firms to de-prioritize malignant brain tumor patients. Between 1998 and 2014, 78 investigational brain tumor drugs entered advanced clinical trial evaluation and 75 failed.

This lack of new drugs led Dr. Sanai in 2016 to launch a bold approach to treat glioblastoma with Barrow's 'Phase 0' trials. In a Phase 0 trial, a patient receives a small dose of an experimental drug the day before surgery. During the operation, surgeons collect the patient's samples and a team of scientists immediately test for the effectiveness of the drug. Results are available in days and, if the trial drug proves to be active, the patient goes on to receive aggressive treatment with higher doses. This approach is a unique form of personalized medicine and the first of its kind for brain tumor patients.

Prior to Barrow's daring expansion into [Phase 0](#) trialing, complex studies like this were only attempted at the National Institutes of Health. Now, Barrow is leading a national movement to rapidly identify new drugs that will save lives. "Phase 0 trials are the quickest route to identify individualized strategies for treating glioblastoma and our approach demands only a fraction of the time and costs associated with traditional drug research and development," says Dr. Sanai. "With the Ivy Foundation's grant and Barrow's expertise in Phase 0 trialing, we believe glioblastoma will meet its match."

[The Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation](#), based in Scottsdale, Ariz., is the largest non-governmental funding mechanism of brain tumor research in the world, having committed more than \$123 million to patient-focused research on gliomas, a type of tumor that occurs in the brain and spinal cord. Ivy became involved in brain tumor research when her husband, Ben, lost his battle with glioblastoma in 2005.

"Thanks to the Ivy Foundation's inspiring commitment, the Barrow Neurological Institute has established the Ivy Brain Tumor Center, a 15,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility that provides Dr. Sanai and his team of scientists and clinician specialists with state-of-the-art resources to focus on accelerated patient trials and save lives", said Katie Cobb, president of the [Barrow Neurological Foundation](#).