

# 'Seena' clinical trials named for pancreatic cancer advocate

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A son's passion to find a cure for the cancer that claimed the life of his mother has led to a new series of clinical trials under a Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) initiative to find a cure for pancreatic cancer.

The 'Seena I' clinical trial is named for Seena Magowitz, a [cancer research](#) advocate and patient who fell victim to pancreatic [cancer](#) - the nation's fourth leading cause of cancer death.

[Pancreatic cancer](#) patients can soon enroll in Seena I, which is planned for at least four clinical sites across the nation, including Virginia G. Piper [Cancer Center Clinical Trials](#) at Scottsdale Healthcare.

The Pancreatic Cancer Research Team (PCRT) will supervise the Seena trials. PCRT is a worldwide consortium of 45 clinical institutions led by TGen and dedicated to finding a cure for pancreatic cancer.

For nearly a decade, Scottsdale resident Roger Magowitz has championed research into finding a cure for pancreatic cancer, a disease that took the life of his mother, Seena, in 2001.

"I am deeply honored and filled with tremendous hope that the clinical trials named for my mother, Seena, will lead - perhaps within just a few years - to an actual cure for pancreatic cancer," said Roger Magowitz, President of the Seena Magowitz Foundation, who has donated \$1 million to the TGen pancreatic cancer initiative.

The pancreas is a gland behind the stomach that secretes enzymes into the upper part of the small intestine to help digestion. It also produces hormones, including insulin, which helps regulate the metabolism of sugars.

The Seena I trial consists of three treatment components:

- The first treatment will be with gemcitabine and nab-paclitaxel (Abraxane) for a maximum of 6 months.
- The next treatment is with a combination of four drugs: 5-FU (fluoruracil); Leucovorin; Oxaliplatin; and Irinotecan. This combination is called FOLFIRINOX, an acronym of all drugs combined. Patients will be given this treatment for a maximum of 6 months.
- In the third treatment, the patient's tumor will be biopsied and analyzed using molecular profiling to determine the next most appropriate treatment. Patients also will receive a drug called Metformin during this part of the study.

The plan is to attack all components of the cancer: the tumor cell, their support structure and their energy source.

The clinical trial sites includes the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center Clinical Trials, a partnership of TGen and Scottsdale Healthcare, where the principal investigator is TGen Physician-In-Chief Dr. Daniel Von Hoff, one of the world's leading authorities on pancreatic cancer. Dr. Von Hoff also is chief scientific officer at the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare.

Dr. Von Hoff said that TGen, through the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare and its other PCRT partners, are making progress in the quest to end this cancer: "We are to deliver a knockout punch by combining the best treatments we have against the disease. The contributions of Roger Magowitz represent significant acceleration toward our goal of finding better treatments, and ultimately a cure."

The other clinical trial sites are:

Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, Minneapolis, Minn., where the principal investigator is Dr. John Seng: "We are one of the nation's leading pancreatic cancer treatment centers. The new Seena clinical trial will allow patients to take a more active role in their health care, gain access to new drugs, treatments and disease management practices, and contribute to medical research."

Evergreen Hematology & Oncology, Spokane, Wash., where the principal investigator is Dr. Stephen Anthony: "As the former Chief Medical Officer of [TGen](#) Drug Development, I know how meticulously this study will be organized and conducted, using every efficiency possible to reach patients with the safest and most effective compounds possible."

Roy and Patricia Disney Family Cancer Center, Burbank, Calif., where the principal investigator is Dr. Peter Rosen: "The Roy and Patricia Disney Family Cancer Center brings innovative clinical trials to the San Fernando Valley, an underserved population of close to 3 million inhabitants. In addition to Phase I (drug development) trials and an Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) program, we are committed to a frontal attack on pancreas cancer, the nation's fourth leading cause of cancer mortality. The Seena trial exemplifies that commitment."

Provided by The Translational Genomics Research Institute

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