

June 27, 2017

Mr. Rob Butcher, CEO
Swim Across America
N. Community House Road, Suite 100
Charlotte, NC 28277

Dear Mr. Butcher:

Since 2010, Swim Across America's support for the Center for Biomarkers and Emerging Technology (CBET) at Women & Infants has supported gynecologic oncology fellows and research scientists working in the CBET research lab. With funding in part from Swim Across America, in 2011 CBET and the Molecular Therapeutics Laboratory made a breakthrough discovery of a biomarker for ovarian cancer called HE4 and developed the ROMA algorithm, which can with specificity estimate the risk of ovarian cancer in women with a pelvic mass. This test is now widely used. Over the last several years, SAA-supported research on HE4 has expanded to study the function of HE4 within the cancer cells, as well as the use of novel therapeutics targeted against HE4.

Basic science research can be slow to yield clinical results. However, the ROMA algorithm has proven itself to be a game-changer for women with ovarian cancer, which is notoriously difficult to diagnose at an early stage when it is most treatable.

I am currently caring for a 69-year-old patient who initially complained to her primary care physician about abdominal pain. Ultrasound testing showed small ovarian cysts and haziness in her mid-abdomen. A blood test that screens for ovarian cancer, the CA 125 assay, was in the normal range. But the ROMA test showed that her HE4 was significantly elevated. She was referred to the Women & Infants Program in Women's Oncology, where she was found to have Stage IIIC primary peritoneal cancer. Without the ROMA test, this patient would not have been referred to Women & Infants and treatment would have been delayed significantly. The patient is now being treated and there is hope.

With Swim Across America's support, we are continuing our work to find new and better ways to diagnose and treat ovarian cancer. On behalf of my patient, and many like her, I thank you for this generous support.

With gratitude,



Katina Robison, MD
Director of Research
Program in Women's Oncology
Women & Infants Hospital
Assistant Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Medicine
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University