



March 15, 2017

Mr. Rob Butcher
Chief Executive Officer
Swim Across America
11600 N. Community House Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28277

Dear Rob,

Rush University Medical Center is honored to be one of Swim Across America's many beneficiary hospitals nationwide. Moreover, Rush is fortunate to be an exclusive partner with SAA Chicago, and we are grateful for the nearly \$300,000 Rush receives each year to conduct critical, life-saving cancer research.

We feel that Rush's partnership with SAA is a prime example of the critical impact that philanthropic support can have in advancing highly promising cancer research. Once the SAA funds are received each year, Rush sends out a request for cancer-related proposals across the institution. These proposals then go through a ranking process similar to the process used by the NIH, which includes an intense peer-to-peer review. The goal is to award \$50,000 to five or six of the most promising cancer research projects, providing seed or gap funding that helps further develop the evidence-based research needed to successfully compete for NIH funding. Several of the research projects supported by SAA have already received or are on the verge of receiving highly coveted National Institutes of Health grant dollars, which in recent years have become much more competitive. This would not be possible without SAA and other key benefactors.

Rush believes so strongly in its partnership with SAA that we are pleased to participate by forming a sizeable team of Rush employee swimmers — a team that has consistently been among the top fundraising teams for the event. One investigator who swims is now a two-time RO1 recipient. Rush also hosts tours and kickoff events to promote SAA and its key role in helping to fuel new cancer-fighting discoveries. From lab to bedside treatments to breakthrough clinical trials, SAA is making an enormous difference in the quality of care.

Our partnership with SAA is giving families throughout the Midwest new hope that cancer can not only be treated, but often overcome. We are very grateful to SAA and look forward to continuing this meaningful relationship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. DeCresce', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert DeCresce, MD
Interim Director
Rush University Cancer Center