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Open Letter to the Application Review Subcommittee
Re: CLIN2-19191 – TriLeukeVax (TLV)

Dear Members of the Application Review Subcommittee,

Dr. Karin Gaensler is currently my physician and studies cancers of the blood with a major interest in acute myelogenous leukemia (AML), the disease I had. One of the most frightening things about leukemia is that even if you go into remission with chemotherapy treatment, there is still a good chance that relapse could happen. Dr. Gaensler is developing an approach to reducing relapse by stimulating patients' immune cells to recognize and kill leukemia cells that can persist and cause relapse even after achieving remission with chemotherapy. For as long as I have known her, Dr. Gaensler has been deeply committed to her research to find better therapies for her patients. She collaborates with individuals in California, nationally, and internationally. During the time we have known each other Karin has shared her progress and challenges with me when I have asked. The hurdles often seem immense.

I was diagnosed with AML by Dr. Gaensler in 2019 and was treated at UCSF. Because I had a higher risk form of leukemia, I underwent a bone marrow stem cell transplant. After the transplant, there were various complications and issues that I got through with the help of my family and Dr. Gaensler. One of the major challenges for me was that I live several hours from UCSF which resulted in awful long commutes for clinic visits and actually having to relocate to the Bay area during the transplant period. These commutes affected me as well as others because I was not strong enough to make the drive myself. The drive from Modesto to UCSF would take anywhere from 1.5hrs to 3hrs depending on the day, and then another 2 hours at minimum for lab draws and patient visits. I was very fortunate to have friends, family and co-workers who could help with this. At transplant time I relocated to the KOZ House for transplant patients for 3 months while recovering. Staying close to UCSF was crucial for my recovery; however, I was fortunate to have a job and bosses who knew how important this was for me, and who were understanding of my absence from work. They helped with the extreme financial demands required during this process. During my stay at the KOZ House I met many others fighting AML as I was, but with very little support from their families. I could not imagine how I would have gotten thru this having to be all alone because my family had to work and could not make the drive with them.

I met a mother who had AML while I was there. She could not afford a place to stay and her daughter and her would sleep in the parking garage of the hospital. This was not only unsanitary but dangerous. Had they had options that would have allowed them to be treated closer to home, it could have made a large difference in her unfortunate outcome of AML taking her life.

For some of these reasons mentioned above, once I was finally well and back to myself, I decided to start a fund-raising drive for Karin's research program on AML vaccines and to present the proceeds to her as a surprise!!

My place of business, Vintage Car Wash, approached me on wanting to help with the research of AML and finding solutions in a process that helps with less evasiveness into our everyday lives so I reached out to UCSF donations processes. We set up a fundraising page which we shared with our customers through flyers and social media. We made t-shirts for purchase and those proceeds as well as \$1 per car wash during the month of September in 2022 was donated to try to help Dr. Gaenslers research. We raised a total of \$7382 in this one month. A small amount in the entire aspect of what is needed to keep this program going and reaching their end goal. When I was able to bring the large check to Karin, I was gifted the opportunity to tour her lab and meet her amazing crew who shares in this passion to help others with this horrible disease.

I sent Karin a message after the drive to watch my interview on TV, which aired on Good Day Sacramento, CBSnews. <https://www.cbsnews.com/gooddaysacramento/video/vintage-car-wash/> I had never done anything like this but wanted to share my story and hopefully get more donations to help...she was so surprised and moved. I think the important thing that Karin is trying to address is not only how to reduce relapse, but how to make new therapies more available to people who live at a distance from major medical centers and who may have more limited resources. This vaccine (TriLeukeVax) could be made from diagnostic bone marrow from anyone diagnosed with AML (initially at UCSF) and sent to their community oncology practice for injection. I urge you to help to fund this new treatment that could give AML patients new opportunities for longer remission and good health.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story and to reach out to you on behalf of this important treatment opportunity.

Sincerely,

Laura

Laura Beck-Stewart.