How Your Gift is Making Cancer History®

Inflammatory breast cancer (IBC) is the most lethal and aggressive form of breast cancer; it is highly metastatic. To date, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved targeted therapies that are specific for IBC. Our long-term goal is to decrease the mortality associated with IBC by developing a novel targeted therapy. It is therefore critical to identify the molecules that contribute to the aggressive nature of IBC and elucidate how these molecules promote the progression of IBC.

Our previous study identified a novel oncogenic protein, tazarotene-induced gene 1 (TIG1), which promotes the progression of IBC. We demonstrated that TIG1 performs its function through the mediation of a receptor tyrosine kinase, Axl.

We hypothesize that Axl is a potential therapeutic target for patients with IBC.

With the support of this gift, we will learn how Axl regulates IBC progression and can investigate the therapeutic efficacy of Axl inhibitors in IBC cells and pre-clinical models. This should lead to the development of Axl-targeted therapy for patients with IBC and subsequent clinical trials in the Morgan Welch Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Program and Clinic at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, the world’s largest IBC clinic. Your gift is contributing to the reduction of mortality caused by IBC, which currently represents eight to ten percent of breast cancer deaths, through the establishment of a novel and effective targeted therapy for patients with IBC.