

# President's *Corner*

REPORTS AND OPINIONS FROM DR. MICHAEL KEATING  
ON THE HAPPENINGS OF THE CLL RESEARCH WORLD

## *CLL research Snowballs into 2013*



*Dr. Michael J. Keating,  
president and CEO of CLL  
Global Research Foundation*

Prior to CLL Global, CLL research was not a “happening place” to be. The Foundation cannot take sole credit for the drastic changes in research, but I know our impact has been felt across the globe.

You may have heard or read the story of how, back in 2003, a newly diagnosed patient of mine was shocked about the state of funding for CLL research and challenged me to change it. We started CLL Global Research Foundation, and so the little snowball effect began. CLL is a disease that was often dismissed by large funding agencies. The Foundation filled a much needed void for the research community. Today we understand more about the disease, are better at diagnosing it and more people now realize how important it is to keep advancing on this accelerated path.

In the beginning our donor base was small. So was our reach. Funding was initially provided to five individual researchers once a year. We proved our concept worked and the donors and donations grew. The number of research applicants began to grow as well. The Alliance program was initiated in 2008 to merge aspects of CLL research, because 30 minds working together is better than one working individually. CLL researchers from around the world heard about the Foundation and reached out to us for help. Our impact continued to snowball.

Even when times are tough, we keep on trucking. Our Board of Directors has been very smart in managing your money. We operate frugally, but we have a global impact because we fund CLL research wherever it happens to excel.

Grant recipients from all over the world recognize that we are open to new ideas and have shared this with their colleagues so that we are within grasp of every CLL



researcher. One of my long time Italian colleagues, Dr. Federico Caligaris-Cappio, noted recently that CLL research at his institute has expanded specifically because of his work through his CLL Global Alliance project.

Not only has our donor base grown, but long term supporters see the difference we have made and know that we are accomplishing our goals. I think this is one of the reasons why we have seen an increase in fundraising events by the donors that are highlighted in CLL Global newsletters. I continue to be amazed by the energy and generosity of CLL Global supporters. It is inspiring to see so many people play an active role in fighting their disease.

This time last year, I declared that 2012 would be a pinnacle year for CLL research, and it was. We have discussed many of the accomplishments in detail throughout the year. Some of you reading this are currently benefiting from the new targeted therapies such as ibrutinib and GS-1101. There are additional new targeted therapies in the pipeline for 2013 such as ABT-199. People around the country have put faith in chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) technology and are participating in an approach to treatment that is truly the first of its kind.

For me personally, 2012 was also a banner year for CLL research because CLL was identified as one of the inaugural MD Anderson Moon Shots. For the first time ever, a major institution is spotlighting this orphan cancer. MD Anderson is willing to back CLL because

of the progress we have made, and they believe that the ideas we have are ready to make curing CLL a short-term reality.

The projects that we plan to move forward through the Moon Shot initiative were all developed by researchers in the CLL Alliance program. They are endeavors we have been communicating about for several years now. Researchers from all over the world contributed to the success of the CLL Moon Shot at MD Anderson, and as a supporter of CLL Global, you have been and will continue to be ahead of the game in knowing the progress we are making in this disease. There is much more to come in 2013 and beyond.

We did not get here wishing and hoping. Everyone involved has put forth a significant effort to get us where we are. Thousands of charities are worthy of your support, but I like to think that we go above and beyond which is why you continue to support us. Let's keep the momentum and grow our snowball into an avalanche so we can knock CLL down for good.

Wishing you and yours a special holiday season.


