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## **Penn doc standing up to cancer**

by John George

Dr. Craig B. Thompson, director of the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania, was selected to co-lead one of five multidisciplinary "dreams teams" put together as part of ambitious national initiative to expedite the development of innovative cancer treatments.

Stand Up To Cancer said Wednesday it is awarding \$73.6 million for "groundbreaking" cancer research projects that include more than 300 researchers at 20 leading cancer centers in the United States.

Funding for the cancer research projects are coming from a combination of corporate and organization donations along with money raised from philanthropists, volunteer teams and the general public. The bulk of the money was raised through a telethon Stand Up To Cancer organized last year that was aired simultaneously on the ABC, CBS and NBC networks.

"The Dream Teams bring together leading laboratory scientists and physicians, collaborating in ways that are unprecedented with a laser-like focus on research that has enormous potential to help patients and save lives," said Philip A. Sharp, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and chairman of the Stand Up To Cancer scientific advisory committee that reviewed application. "The Stand Up To Cancer model could very well change the face of cancer."

Penn's Thompson is leading a study called "Cutting off the Fuel Supply: A New Approach to the Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer." His co-leader is Dr. Daniel D. Von Hoff, senior investigator and physician-in-chief at the Translational Research Genomics Institute in Phoenix.

Thompson's team received a three-year, \$18 million grant for the project, which will focus on discovering more about what metabolic nutrients pancreatic tumors rely on to grow — and develop new therapies designed to cut off that essential fuel.

The American Cancer Society estimates about 42,500 people in the United States will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer during 2009. Pancreatic cancer is one of the toughest

types of cancer to treat. About 80 percent of patients who get the diagnosis die within a year.

[Stand Up To Cancer](#), which is dedicated to raising funds to hasten the pace of groundbreaking translational cancer research, was started in late 2007 by a group of women whose lives have been affected by cancer. The group was formally launched on May 27, 2008.