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Gastric Cancer Foundation launches new clinical trials navigator

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A special grant from Stupid Strong Charitable Foundation, a Texas organization established by Jeff and Candace Netzer, is enabling Gastric Cancer Foundation to bring this new service to gastric cancer patients.



The Gastric Cancer Foundation has launched its new website this month and has introduced an online clinical trials navigator to help patients more easily identify clinical trials matched with their specific diagnosis, stage, and treatment history. A special grant from Stupid Strong Charitable Foundation, a Texas organization established by Jeff and Candace Netzer, is enabling Gastric Cancer Foundation to bring this new service to gastric cancer patients.

The impetus for the Foundation came from JP Gallagher, a Silicon Valley marketing executive, who was diagnosed with stomach cancer at age 37 and could not find reliable information about the disease. He battled the disease for six years before passing in 2013, leaving behind a wife and three young children. Gallagher along with other families affected by the disease formed the Foundation to encourage more research funding and to give patients and families a place to turn to find resources.

The service is named in memory of Candace Netzer who lost her battle with the disease in November 2017. Jeff Netzer is a member of the Gastric Cancer Foundation's board of directors. According to Jeff Netzer, "It was difficult for my wife and me to quickly identify and connect with clinical trials once her initial lines of treatment failed. Access to this type of compassionate and knowledgeable navigator would have lessened anxiety and fear during a critical time. Stupid Strong is proud to partner with Gastric Cancer Foundation on this project. I know Candace would be thrilled that the Foundation is able to provide this much needed service to patients and families now, and to support research towards better treatment alternatives in the future."

"One of the most frustrating experiences for patients battling gastric cancer is trying to find appropriate clinical treatment trials among the burgeoning national database of trials," noted Alice Leung, Gastric Cancer Foundation Co-Chair. "At the same time, researchers frequently report that they cannot enroll enough participants in their investigative trials. With this new navigator, we hope to match more gastric cancer patients with trials that can make a difference in their treatment while furthering promising research," explained Leung.

Patients and their families are encouraged to review the navigator and learn how they can easily participate by filling out a short online survey. The clinical trial database is hosted by EmergingMed and includes all treatment trials from clinicaltrials.gov along with updates reported directly by trial sponsors and sites. For more than a decade, EmergingMed has facilitated clinical trial searches for nearly 500,000 patients.

The Foundation's Board of Directors was most impressed with this navigator's commitment to privacy and its ability to provide patients with personalized guidance to find clinical trials that match their diagnosis and treatment history. The service can also update patients when new trials and sites open that match their profiles. "This clinical trials navigator is one more tool to further our mission of education, research, and advocacy for gastric cancer patients," said Foundation Board Co-Chair Paul Gottsegen.

Gastric Cancer Foundation has granted more than $2 million for gastric cancer research, elevating research funding for this cancer that receives only .04% of all federal funding for cancer research. Additionally, it created the first HIPAA-compliant Gastric Cancer Registry and a perpetual Research Scholar Award to fund talented young scientists who are pursuing research on this often-neglected disease. Since 2009, the Foundation has established a successful track record of strategic investments in early stage research efforts that have made breakthrough discoveries.