

## Versiti to Launch Northwestern Mutual Pediatric Leukemia Bank

\$150,000 Grant from Northwestern Mutual to Support Bank's Operations, Aiding Vital Research to Develop New Treatments for Children

MILWAUKEE, March 2, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Versiti today announced that it has been awarded a \$150,000 grant by Northwestern Mutual, through its Foundation, to launch the Northwestern Mutual Pediatric Leukemia Bank – a collaborative bank between Versiti, Children's Wisconsin and the Medical College of Wisconsin – which will enable timely access to leukemia samples from pediatric patients at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus.

The bank, which is expected to become operational in June of 2021, will be utilized by researchers and physicians at Children's Wisconsin and researchers at Versiti's Blood Research Institute to develop new treatments for children.

"Leukemia is one of the most common cancer diagnoses in children, though establishing effective treatment protocols remains very challenging," said Dr. Sid Rao, an associate investigator at Versiti who specializes in stem cell biology and hematopoiesis. "This bank will be an invaluable resource for researchers at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus to obtain live cells quickly from Children's Wisconsin patients to conduct experiments to improve the lives of children with leukemia."

The new bank will uniquely store live, pediatric leukemia samples which are critical to pediatric researchers at Children's Wisconsin, and will provide a unique opportunity for Medical College of Wisconsin faculty members focused on adult diseases and investigators at Versiti's Blood Research Institute to expand their research programs into pediatric cancers.

The grant from Northwestern Mutual will cover a significant portion of the estimated cost for the first five years of the bank's operations.

"We know that research is the engine that drives progress and will create pathways for a cure," said Eric Christophersen, president, Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "This grant will provide vital resources and make a significant impact on the understanding and treatment of pediatric cancer, changing the lives of patients and families for years to come in the effort to cure childhood cancer."

Since 2012, Northwestern Mutual's Childhood Cancer Program has focused on advancing childhood cancer research, providing family and patient support and serving as a resource to families managing the long-term effects of cancer treatment. With the support of Northwestern Mutual employees and financial advisors nationwide, the company has contributed more than \$35 million and funded over 455,000 hours of research through the program.

Locating viable pediatric leukemia samples is a challenge to researchers nationwide because of how samples are typically prepared and/or stored. Though large, national leukemia banks exist, samples are typically frozen in a way which prevents the recovery of live cells, precluding their utility in a range of lab assays such as testing small molecules. Additionally, it can take up to a year to obtain samples from such banks, inhibiting timely study and experimentation.

### About Versiti

Versiti, a national leader in blood health innovation, was formed with the mission to improve the health of patients and enable the success of our health care partners nationally. We provide innovative, value-added solutions in the fields of transfusion medicine, transplantation, and blood-related diseases to meet the needs of each of our customers. The collective efforts across Versiti result in improved patient outcomes, expanded access to care and cost efficiencies for health care systems nationwide. For more information, visit [versiti.org](https://www.versiti.org).

### About Northwestern Mutual

[Northwestern Mutual](https://www.northwesternmutual.com) has been helping people and businesses achieve financial security for more than 160 years. Through a holistic planning approach, Northwestern Mutual combines the expertise of its financial professionals with a personalized digital experience and industry-leading products to help its clients plan for what's most important. With \$308.8 billion in total assets, \$31.1 billion in revenues, and over \$2 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to more than 4.75 million people with life, disability income and long-term care insurance, annuities, and brokerage and advisory services. The company has more than \$200 billion of investments owned by its clients and held or managed through its wealth management and investment services businesses. Northwestern Mutual ranks 102 on the 2020 FORTUNE 500 and is recognized by FORTUNE® as one of the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2021.

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company (NM) (life and disability insurance, annuities, and life insurance with long-term care benefits) and its subsidiaries in Milwaukee, WI. Subsidiaries include **Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC** (investment brokerage services), broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company® (investment advisory

and trust services), a federal savings bank; and Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company (long-term care insurance).

#### **About Northwestern Mutual Foundation**

The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation is to improve the lives of children and families in need. The Foundation has given more than \$400 million since its inception in 1992 and is designed to create lasting impact in the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. We accomplish this by combining financial support, volunteerism, thought leadership and convening community partners to deliver the best outcomes. Our efforts are focused nationally on curing childhood cancer, and locally on education, neighborhoods and making our hometown of Milwaukee a great destination. Visit Northwestern Mutual Foundation to learn more.

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