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For Immediate Release

ALLIANCE FOR CANCER GENE THERAPY PRESENTS BRAIN CANCER: SEARCHING FOR A BREAKTHROUGH WITH GENE AND CELL THERAPY

Symposium Open to the Public, January 28, 2010, 7:00 p.m., Bruce Museum

(**GREENWICH**, Conn., January 8, 2010) – There were an estimated 22,070 new cases of brain and other nervous system cancers diagnosed in 2009 – that is approximately an eight percent increase in the incidence of brain cancer since 2005. Of those diagnosed, 48 percent will survive. The Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy, the only national non-profit committed exclusively to cancer gene therapy research, is listening intently for good news regarding this insurgent form of cancer. It is impossible not to address the apparent increased incidence of this disease, which has indiscriminately taken the lives of national celebrities, politicians, amongst them Senator Ted Kennedy, and local residents, including young children. The time is now for us to all look at this issue together and sort out its causes and hope for the future.

The Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), founded by local Greenwich residents Barbara and Edward Netter, is a leader in funding and promoting research into all forms of cancer. ACGT is offering the topic of brain cancer for its 2010 educational program, with three highly credentialed leading scientists who will share insights and progress on innovative approaches to the treatment of this devastating disease using cells and genes as “medicine.” In addition to the informal presentations and discussion amongst the presenters, the program will then be open to questions and answers. This presentation, which is free and open to the public, will be held on **Thursday, January 28, 2010, at 7:00 p.m., at the Bruce Museum**, One Museum Drive, in Greenwich, Conn. For more information, please call Betty Condon at 203-358-8000 or email bcondon@acgtfoundation.org.

Robert Martuza, M.D., F.A.C.S., Chief of Neurosurgery at Massachusetts General Hospital and William and Elizabeth Sweet Professor of Neuroscience at Harvard Medical School, also a member of ACGT’s scientific advisory committee, will moderate the program, including two ACGT Research Fellows involved in innovative brain cancer projects, **Miguel Sena-Esteves, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor Department of Neurology and Gene Therapy Center, University of Massachusetts Medical School, and **Antonio E. Chiocca, M.D., Ph.D.**, Chairman, Department of Neurological Surgery, The Ohio State University Medical Center and James Cancer Hospital.

The panel discussion will allow each participant to reflect on his specific challenges, successes, progress and future plans when it comes to brain cancer research and treatment. There will be discussion among the scientists followed by questions from the audience.

Dr. Martuza is a member of the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council. Gene and cell therapy deals with the source of cancer - the genes and cells— and that will be the focal point of the program. The speakers' deep understanding of the subject matter will invite the audience to journey with them to where science is heading at this time ... a more successful, less invasive approach to cancer treatment.

Dr. Sena-Esteves received an ACGT 2005 Young Investigator Award for his studies on Gene Therapy for Brain Tumors. His work is based on the genetic modification of normal brain cells to create an environment that prevents tumor growth. Adeno-associated virus [AAV] vectors are used to introduce into normal brain cells, or into blood vessels, a gene that makes a protein that is selectively active against tumor cells. This approach may lead to the creation of widespread anti-tumor networks capable of preventing brain tumors from growing or reappearing after surgery.

Dr. Chiocca, an ACGT 2007 Clinical Investigator, will explain advances using tumor specific replicating viruses and bacterium. Malignant gliomas are one of the most incurable forms of cancer, attacking the brain of children or adults and causing death, on the average, within 1-2 years. He has been employing tumor-selective viruses that will specifically attack these cancers in the brain and also will sensitize these cancers to the effect of chemotherapy by transferring genes that activate such chemotherapy drugs. His clinical trial in humans will involve injecting the brain tumor with viral transferred genes in combination with two chemotherapy agents, thus creating a more effective anticancer agent.

The Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT) supports the extraordinary potential offered by gene and cell-based therapies to accelerate effective and safe treatment of all types of cancer. Founded in 2001 by Greenwich residents Barbara and Edward Netter, it is the only national non-profit organization committed exclusively to cancer gene therapy research and is identified by the BBB as an Accredited Charity. One hundred percent (100%) of all funds raised by ACGT go directly to support medical research.

Since its inception in 2001, ACGT has issued over \$20 million in research grants to 33 ACGT Research Fellows representing such leading research institutions as Harvard Medical School, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Mayo Clinic, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Duke University, The Salk Institute, University of Pennsylvania, Memorial Sloan-Kettering, University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine, and the University of Chicago. Identified through a rigorous selection procedure, the scientists and their research projects address brain, breast, lymphoma/leukemia, prostate, lung, and ovarian cancer among others.

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