

2 cancer researchers to appear on national fundraising telethon

By Diana Balazs
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Two noted Valley cancer researchers will appear on Friday's celebrity-studded broadcast of the Stand Up to Cancer national telethon.

The Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea is part of a Stand Up to Cancer "dream team," one of only five in the country.

The center is a clinical-trial site for a pancreatic-cancer study that also involves the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. The Scottsdale center is the only center in Arizona offering direct access to the clinical trials, Scottsdale Healthcare officials said.

The team received an \$18 million three-year grant from Stand Up to Cancer, a program of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, Hollywood's leading charity.

Drs. Daniel Von Hoff and Ramesh Ramanathan will participate in the one-hour telethon that's sponsored by the foundation. It airs 7 p.m. Friday locally on all major television networks, including Channel 12 (KPNX).

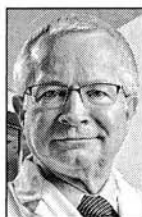
Von Hoff is chief scientific officer at the center and physician-in-chief at the Translational Genomics Research Institute in Phoenix. He co-leads the pancreatic cancer dream team.

Ramanathan, medical director of Scottsdale Healthcare's cancer-research clinic, is the principal investigator for the team's clinical trials in Scottsdale.

"The aim of the Stand Up to Cancer program is to fund grants that can make scientific breakthroughs," Ramanathan said.

He said having researchers collaborate is unique because, in the past, research has been hampered by not having experts work together.

Stand Up to Cancer held its first telethon in 2008, raising more than \$100 million. Dr. William Nelson, director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, is a member of the scientific advisory committee that evaluates potential research projects for funding.



**Daniel
Von Hoff**

Nelson said there are five dream teams. Their mission is to find new and effective treatments for cancers more quickly.

"This is an attempt to create consortium of talent throughout the country regardless of what institution they are with," he said.

The pancreatic cancer clinical trials opened last week at the center in Scottsdale.

The project will look at pancreatic tumors' metabolism and find ways to starve those tumors of nutrients.

Combination drug therapy also will be used, said Mark Slater, Scottsdale Healthcare's vice president of research. Scar tissue forms around pancreatic-cancer cells, making it difficult for drugs to enter.

"We will use one drug to break that down and one to attack the cancer," Slater said.