The Use of the BH3 Inhibitor, P13K, to Overcome Stroma-Media-Mediated Resistance—Progress Report. Lead Investigator: Mathew S. Davids, M.D., Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

My funding from the CLL Foundation has been instrumental in allowing me to make significant progress in my work of developing more effective treatment options for patients with CLL. Specifically, we have begun utilizing patient samples from our clinical trial of a promising new drug for CLL called ABT-199 to further develop our BH3 profiling assay as a predictive biomarker. Our early data suggest that the level of priming for apoptosis we observe in the bone marrow of these patients appears to predict who will have the best response to the drug. We are hopeful that if we can further validate these results that in the future this test can be done prior to starting patients on this therapy, and only those patients predicted to have a good response would receive the drug. I have presented the data from this clinical trial at several international meetings, including the European Hematology Association meeting in Stockholm, the International Congress of Malignant Lymphoma in Lugano, the International Workshop of CLL in Cologne, and the American Society of Hematology in New Orleans. I have also made significant progress with developing my own innovative clinical trials for patients with CLL. My first investigator-initiated trial of an immune modulatory drug called ipilimumab has now opened and we have put several patients on study. I also recently received approval from Pharmacyclics to conduct a clinical trial of ibrutinib, the most promising new therapy in development for CLL, with FCR, the most powerful chemoimmunotherapy regimen. I am hopeful that this will be a very effective treatment option for CLL patients, and I plan to do extensive laboratory correlative studies such as BH3 profiling with the patient samples from this trial. The CLL Foundation funding will make this possible, so I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities that this award has provided me.