



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/23/2023

Contact:

Hope Hennessy, Executive Director
Minnesota Colorectal Research Foundation (MCCRF)
Phone: 612-567-8081
Email: hope@minnesotacolorectal.org

MCCRF Awards Matthew Dietz Norm and Pat Wells Memorial Grant to Research Impacts of the Microbiome and Gut Bacteria on Colorectal Cancer

The Minnesota Colorectal Cancer Research Foundation has awarded the 2023 Norm and Pat Wells Memorial Grant to University of Minnesota graduate student, Matthew Dietz. Mr. Dietz will be researching the impacts of various gut bacteria on colorectal cancer metastasis.

“We know that various gut bacteria are associated with an elevated risk of colorectal cancer (CRC) and a reduced success rate of certain cancer treatments,” commented Mr. Dietz. “The Wells Memorial Grant will support my efforts to learn more about how harmful gut bacteria communicate to one another through quorum sensing. New research has shown that quorum sensing communication happens between our cells and gut microbiome, and that this can encourage metastasis in colorectal cancer. Having a better understanding of this process will improve our ability to support patient care and treatment.”

Dietz will be working with enzymes to show how they can degrade harmful communication signals promoting CRC cancer tumor growth and metastasis. He will also examine the effects this may have on tumor growth in mouse models, with a goal of determining what role these communication signals play in cancer development and metastasis, and how these enzymes could be used (as an addition or alternative) to existing cancer therapies.

###

The **Minnesota Colorectal Cancer Research Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation which funds colon and rectal cancer research in Minnesota. The mission of the foundation is to build a community of colorectal cancer survivors, and their family and friends, who will work passionately to raise money to fund research that will improve the survival and quality of life of people with colon and rectal cancer. The Sarah DeBord Memorial Grant is given annually to promote research projects that support access to care.

Matthew Dietz is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota.

Norm and Pat Wells were two of the founders of the Minnesota Colorectal Research foundation. Norm was diagnosed with Stage 4 Rectal Cancer at the age of 69. Tall, lanky, talkative, and personable, he was a devoted husband and father, an architect, and a lover of classic 1962 Chevys. Pat was a pathology technologist, talkative and warm with immense love for her family. The grant in their memory looks for better ways to treat, prevent and detect colon and rectal cancers.