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# Impact

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THANKING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

## Ivy Foundation supports Dana-Farber's brain cancer research with \$1.5 million gift

**B**en and Catherine Ivy, who had long valued philanthropy and giving back to their community, were contemplating new areas to support in healthcare when Ben was diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme in 2005. After Ben passed away later that year, Catherine committed to honoring her husband's generosity and to helping other patients battling this challenging form of brain cancer by establishing The Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation. The Ivy Foundation funds cutting-edge research to help advance the diagnosis and care of patients with brain cancer, ultimately aiming to improve their quality of life and double their life expectancy.

Toward this goal, the Ivy Foundation recently awarded David Reardon, MD, clinical director of Dana-Farber's Center for Neuro-Oncology, a \$1.5 million grant to support his innovative, promising neuro-oncology research. Reardon is currently developing several complementary treatment strategies that may offer new ways to combat glioblastoma tumors through immunotherapy. Cancer immunotherapy, an exciting field in which Dana-Farber has been a pioneer for decades, focuses on leveraging the body's immune system to combat cancer. Since the brain interacts with the immune system in a unique way, most immunotherapy advances in other types of cancer do not directly translate to treatments for neuro-oncology patients. Reardon is spearheading efforts to learn how this strategy can best benefit glioblastoma patients.

"This generous grant from the Ivy Foundation comes at a truly exciting time and is empowering us to take the next steps in advancing several novel immune-based therapies for glioblastoma," said Reardon. "These new potential treatments hold great promise against one of the most aggressive forms of brain cancer, and may help to improve outcomes for patients battling this challenging malignancy. In particular, our NeoVax tumor vaccine trial combines key advances in cancer immunotherapy with



Catherine Ivy, founder and president of The Ben & Catherine Ivy Foundation, which made a significant gift to support research into immunotherapies to combat glioblastoma.

cutting-edge cancer genomics technology."

Thanks to support from the Ivy Foundation, Reardon is currently leading two clinical trials for therapeutic vaccines for brain cancer, including the NeoVax vaccine that was developed by a research team at Dana-Farber. Unlike vaccines that prevent disease, therapeutic vaccines aim to treat cancer by training the immune system to home in on tumor cells already in the body. This gift is thereby empowering Dana-Farber and the Center for Neuro-Oncology to lead the search for potent immunotherapies, and allowing Reardon to continue to make important discoveries while also making these exciting new agents available to patients.

"The Ivy Foundation is dedicated to helping uncover new treatments and strategies to improve outcomes for patients battling brain tumors," said Catherine Ivy, founder and president of The Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation. "We are truly proud to support Dr. Reardon's compelling neuro-oncology research and to help advance Dana-Farber's lifesaving mission." ■