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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Dr. Zachary Watson awarded \$75,000 for Ovarian Cancer Research**

Research to help understand ovarian cancer development

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**Seattle, WA** – The Rivkin Center has awarded Dr. Zachary Watson, PhD, assistant professor at University of Colorado School of Medicine, a \$75,000 grant to investigate the development of ovarian cancer in post-menopausal women. Rivkin Center Pilot Study Awards fund novel, innovative ideas that are in the early stages of discovery.

About his research: Dr. Watson will investigate a potential driver of ovarian cancer development to lay the foundation for discovering new early detection and treatment strategies. Ovarian cancer spreads aggressively into abdominal fat deposits, which often increase after menopause. He found that a type of abdominal fat cell called bone marrow-derived adipocytes (BMDAs) are inflammatory and make ovarian cancer cells grow faster. He will test the hypothesis that BMDAs send signals to cancer cells to turn off tumor suppressor proteins, change their metabolism, and make the cancer cells more aggressive.

“For 25 years, the Rivkin Center’s early funding has helped launch the best new research and the most promising new researchers throughout the world. This year, Dr. Watson’s research project rose to the top of our applications,” said Rivkin Center CEO Molly O’Connor. “We are optimistic that Dr. Watson’s results may help inform the development of new treatments, particularly for post-menopausal women who often have worse disease.”

Ovarian cancer remains the deadliest gynecological cancer because there is still no test to detect it in its earliest, most treatable and most survivable stages. While treatment options have improved, a late diagnosis means that fewer than half of the women diagnosed with ovarian cancer will survive beyond five years.

This year, the Rivkin Center also awarded a Pilot Study grant to Dr. Utthara Nayar, PhD, of Johns Hopkins University’s Bloomberg School of Health, and two \$200,000 grants to ovarian cancer researchers based in Washington state as part of a new public-private partnership with the state’s Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund to invest \$1M in ovarian cancer research in the next two years.

Since 1999, the Rivkin Center has invested \$16.4M in ovarian cancer research worldwide. At an average return of \$17.3 for every dollar the Rivkin Center invests, these initial funds have helped researchers secure another nearly \$280M in funding to continue their work.



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**About the Rivkin Center**

Founded by now-retired oncologist Dr. Saul Rivkin after his wife Marsha died of ovarian cancer at age 49, the Rivkin Center became one of the first nonprofits in the nation to fund ovarian cancer research and education. It is the primary partner of the American Association for Cancer Research on ovarian cancer. The Rivkin Center also continues to lead the longest-standing international conference on ovarian cancer research. This year's conference will be held in Seattle on Sept. 20 and 21. [Rivkin.org](http://Rivkin.org)

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