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## **MOBILE-AREA PHYSICIANS FIRST IN NATION TO OFFER CLINICAL TRIAL FOR TREATMENT OF METASTATIC MELANOMA**

*Major Advancement Now Available to Patients in the Mobile/Gulf Coast Region*

Southern Cancer Center (SCC) and Providence Hospital's Gulf Coast Minority Based Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP) have united to become the first site in the nation to participate in a clinical trial for patients with BRAF-mutated advanced melanoma.

Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer, and BRAF gene mutations have been identified in approximately 60 percent of melanoma cases. Early results show a vast majority of these patients have a remarkable response to new chemotherapy drugs. The melanoma study now available through SCC and Providence is designed to evaluate how an investigational agent, known as GSK2118436, works compared to dacarbazine, a chemotherapy drug often used to treat melanoma. Approximately 200 patients in 12 countries will take part in the study.

"The studies performed to date show a response rate that has never before been seen in prior treatments for melanoma. That it is available here to our community is truly a milestone for cancer care in the Gulf Coast region," said Dr. Brian Heller, principal investigator for the trial.

According to Dr. Heller, cancer care has dramatically shifted in recent years as doctors have discovered more about the molecular and genetic aspects of this disease. "'Targeted' therapeutics are at the heart of many new clinical trials as we attempt to tailor specific treatments to specific cancers," said Dr. Heller. "These therapies are the result of extensive laboratory research and detailed clinical trials which have provided us with scientific data to extend our knowledge of what works, how it works, and how to make it work better for each individual cancer and more importantly, for each individual patient," he said. "Cancer therapy is no longer one size fits all."

For more information about this melanoma study, or other SCC/Providence Hospital Gulf Coast Minority Based CCOP initiatives, please contact Michelle Cramblitt at 251-607-5281.

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