

## SUPPORTING EARLY-CAREER INVESTIGATORS

A strong and diverse pipeline of early-career investigators is vital if we are to continue to accelerate the pace of progress against cancer. To cultivate this pipeline we need robust, sustained, and predictable funding increases for the National Institutes of Health, and federal, state, philanthropic, and private funding programs. Investment in paradigm-shifting research is particularly important for driving the next major breakthroughs. The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is answering this call through its NextGen Grants for Transformative Cancer Research program. In 2018, this program, with support from The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research, will provide crucial resources for innovative research projects conducted by the following bright young scientists:



**Birgit Knoechel, MD, PhD**, who will examine how variability in T cell lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL) cells can contribute to resistance to a targeted therapy. By understanding how and why these therapies fail to work, Dr. Knoechel hopes to develop strategies to overcome resistance and successfully treat children with acute T-ALL.



**Kamila Naxerova, PhD**, who seeks to deepen our understanding of how melanoma metastasizes, or spreads to distant sites within the body. By identifying molecular differences between tumors isolated from different sites in a patient, Dr. Naxerova hopes to reveal fundamental patterns in melanoma evolution and deliver information that can lead to therapeutics to prevent and/or treat metastases.



**Tuomas Tammela, MD, PhD**, who will investigate tumor cell diversity, also called heterogeneity, and how this influences response to treatment.

By discovering pathways that drive distinct cellular characteristics, Dr. Tammela hopes to develop new therapeutic concepts aimed at reducing cellular heterogeneity in tumors.

For more information about this program and the research being conducted by the early-career investigators supported through it see <http://www.aacr.org/FUNDING/PAGES/NEXTGEN-GRANT-RECIPIENTS.ASPX#.WVFFSGxTHfO>.