For Immediate Release: Tuesday, March 14, 2023
Media Contact: Jessica Fraser, jfraser@tmsforacure.org, 260-438-3659

TMS & AAAAI Awards $60,000 Research Grant

“Behavioral and biological mechanism underlying depression in mast cell disorders.”
Jennifer Nicoloro-SantaBarbara, PhD
Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Sterling, MA—The Mast Cell Disease Society, Inc. (TMS) is excited to continue our partnership with the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) in offering the 2023 AAAAI/TMS Research Award in Mast Cell Disorders including Mastocytosis and/or Mast Cell Activation Syndrome. This year’s award was presented to Dr. Jennifer Nicoloro-SantaBarbara of Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH) to conduct studies on “Behavioral and biological mechanism underlying depression in mast cell disorders.”

The selection was made jointly by the AAAAI and TMS; this marks the 6th time TMS and AAAAI have partnered together to fund critical research relating to Mast Cell Diseases. The review process was conducted by an ad-hoc review committee consisting of three members from the AAAAI and three members of TMS, after the final review it was unanimously decided to award the grant to Dr. Nicoloro-SantaBarbara to pursue this important research.

Dr. Nicoloro-SantaBarbara will combine robust behavioral, cognitive, self-report, and molecular methodologies to unveil neurobiological mechanisms that drive depression and impact everyday functioning to create effective treatments to reduce disease burden in affected individuals.
“This funding is enabling me to push forward a novel research question. The data could open new doors to understanding depression in mastocytosis by identifying targets for interventions to improve overall function in those living with this illness,” says Dr. Jennifer Nicoloro-SantaBarbara.

The proposed study will leverage a unique opportunity to improve our understanding of depression in mast cell diseases by expanding data collection in an ongoing study on mastocytosis being conducted by the PI at the Mastocytosis Center at BWH to include 100 individuals with mast cell activation syndrome. The ongoing study involves comprehensive in-clinic, assessment of depression course, current symptoms, treatment history, inflammatory biomarkers (e.g. cytokines), MCDs biomarkers (e.g., histamine, tryptase, prostaglandin D2).

We congratulate Dr. Nicoloro-SantaBarbara on receiving this award!

Learn More about TMS’s recent research grant awards here.

###

**About The Mast Cell Disease Society**
The Mast Cell Disease Society. Inc. (formerly known as The Mastocytosis Society) was founded in 1995 and is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing multi-faceted support to patients, families, and medical professionals in the mast cell disease community and to leading the advancement of knowledge and research in mast cell diseases through education, advocacy, and collaboration.

In its more than 25-year history, TMS has served the mast cell disease community by helping to advance both the clinical and scientific boundaries of mast cell disease care and treatment options. For more information or to donate, please visit the TMS web page at tmsforacure.org.

**About The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology**
The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) is the leading membership organization of more than 7,100 allergists, asthma specialists, clinical
immunologists, allied health professionals and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic and immunologic diseases. The AAAAI is the go-to resource for patients living with allergies, asthma and immune deficiency disorders. Established in 1943, the AAAAI has more than 7,100 members in the United States, Canada and 72 other countries. The AAAAI’s Find an Allergist/Immunologist service is a trusted resource to help you find a specialist close to home.

**About the Brigham & Women’s Hospital-Mastocytosis Center**
The BWH Mastocytosis Center, headed by Dr. Mariana Castells, is a nationally recognized Center of Excellence that brings together allergists, immunologists, pathologists, and other specialists needed to treat the many aspects of mast cell diseases.