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Award-Winning Author, Physician Siddhartha Mukherjee Urges Community Support of Cancer Research

Cancer Center of Santa Barbara hosts panel discussion on 'Where We Are on the War on Cancer'



Dan Greenwald, M.D., left to right, W. Warren Suh, M.D., M.P.H., Siddhartha Mukherjee, M.D., Ph.D., Joel Rothman, Ph.D., and Thomas Weisenburger, M.D., F.A.C.R., speak to local health-care professionals and researchers on Oct. 22 about "Where We Are on the War on Cancer." (Cancer Center of Santa Barbara photo).

By Lindsay Groark for the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara. | Published on 11.17.2011

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Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* joined Cancer Center of Santa Barbara physicians on Oct. 22 to discuss "Where We Are on the War on Cancer."

The afternoon began with a lunch honoring the Cancer Center's Chairman's Circle donors, whom Dr. Mukherjee thanked personally for their contributions in the fight against cancer.

Mukherjee reminded attendees that by supporting the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, they foster promising lab research at UCSB and provide local access to national clinical trials, thereby contributing to the larger "War on Cancer." Mukherjee emphasized the urgency and importance of supporting cancer research in order for the next generation to be equipped with more effective treatment and prevention modalities.



The donor appreciation luncheon was followed by a UCSB Arts & Lectures presentation made possible by an anonymous gift to the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara.

Nearly 600 attendees listened to Mukherjee's account of the history of cancer, its implications on the human race and his appeal for continued public

engagement in support of research. At the end of the presentation, Dr. Fred Kass, the Cancer Center's director of research and wellness, joined Mukherjee for a question-and-answer period, which provided the audience a unique opportunity to ask questions of both of these cancer experts.

The afternoon concluded with a panel discussion for physicians and scientists from the region titled "From Bench to Bedside to Budgets — A Practitioner's Discourse on the Challenges and Opportunities in the War on Cancer," moderated by Dr. Fred Kass and co-hosted by the Santa Barbara County Medical Society.

Panelists included Mukherjee and Cancer Center physicians Thomas Weisenburger, M.D., F.A.C.R., W. Warren Suh, M.D., M.P.H., Daniel Greenwald, M.D., and Joel Rothman, Ph.D, CCSB trustee and professor and chair of UCSB's Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology.

Joining the group for the discussion were local health-care professionals as well as UCSB scientists and researchers in related fields. Mukherjee's message to the group was clear: The knowledge and expertise required to make advancements in cancer prevention and treatment exist, but we must collectively work together to remove "non-intellectual barriers," such as lack of funding or hurdles imposed by insurance, in order to allow further investigation and implementation of promising treatment and prevention methods.

Suggestions for removing these barriers included raising awareness and support of research among the younger generations and supporting local and national government officials who are in favor of cutting-edge cancer studies.

Community members interested in supporting local and national cancer research through the Cancer Center's Clinical Research Program can call Rob Dunton, director of development, at 805.898.3620.

Mukherjee's book is available for loan at the Cancer Center's Cancer Resource Library, 540 W. Pueblo St. The library is available for free to all in the community, and is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The book is also available for purchase at Chaucer's Book Store, 3321 State St.

— Lindsay Groark is public relations and administrative manager for the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara.

