

# FINDINGS

2018 WINTER NEWSLETTER

Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures  
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[nebraskacures.com](http://nebraskacures.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING LUNCHEON  
**SAVE *the* DATE**  
MONDAY **APRIL 30** 2018

*Honoring*  
Dr. Alison Freifeld & Dr. Ken Cowan

*Happy Hollow Club • Omaha, Nebraska*

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**Nebraska Coalition**  
FOR LIFESAVING CURES

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## NCLC to Honor Two Leading Researchers At 16th Annual Spring Luncheon



Dr. Alison Freifeld & Dr. Ken Cowan

For almost two decades, Dr. Alison Freifeld and Dr. Ken Cowan have been sharing their leadership and skills in the field of infectious diseases and cancer research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. On Monday, April 30, 2018, the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures will hold its sixteenth annual tribute luncheon to honor Drs. Freifeld and Cowan with the Lifesaver award.

Dr. Alison Freifeld has been a professor of infectious diseases and medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, since 2000. She has implemented and led many programs focused on managing infections in cancer and

organ transplant patients. She created the UNMC travel health clinic, which protects students and faculty traveling for research or study abroad trips by ensuring they're up-to-date on immunizations. And she's leading a global health initiative that will create medical research and health education collaborations between UNMC and the Rwandan government.

Dr. Freifeld attended medical school and completed her residency at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Johns Hopkins Hospital, respectively. She served as Director of the Infectious Diseases Service for the National Cancer Institute for nine years until coming to UNMC.

Dr. Ken Cowan serves as Director of the Eppley Institute and the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center (formerly known as the Eppley Cancer Center); positions he has held since 1999. His research interests lie in understanding the role tumor suppressor genes have in human tumor development, namely breast cancer.

A New York City native, Dr. Cowan earned his medical and doctorate degrees from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

He completed his residency at Texas Southwestern Affiliated Hospitals in Dallas before working in the Public Health Service at the National Cancer Institute for 21 years, eventually serving as Chief of the Medical Breast Cancer Section, Medicine Branch. He also oversaw laboratory and clinical staff researching breast cancer.

The Coalition will also award the Chancellor Emeritus Harold M. Maurer, M.D. and Beverly Maurer Scientific Achievement award at the luncheon. The award recognizes the accomplishments of University of Nebraska scientists or clinicians that demonstrate promise in research topics that improve the lives of Nebraskans and people around the world. The award was established in 2013 to honor the Maurers.

**NE SCIFEST**

**April 19-28, 2018**

Events being held  
throughout Nebraska

Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving  
Cures is a proud sponsor of the  
Nebraska Science Festival

[www.nescifest.com](http://www.nescifest.com)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dr. David Crouse**  
President, Nebraska  
Coalition for  
Lifesaving Cures

Last year was a busy one for the board of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures. Early in the spring of 2017, we set about on an ambitious plan to conduct an in-depth strategic planning session by the full board. We began with a “visioning session” to set the general direction and tone of our full-day planning session. We had excellent board participation throughout the effort and with time and editing, produced a detailed strategic plan to set the direction for our organization for the foreseeable future.

We determined that the Vision of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures was “Leading society to understand and embrace the importance of scientific research.” This directly supports our Mission which “...promotes, supports and advocates research to advance our quality of life and our economy.” We conducted an intense analysis of our

strengths, opportunities, challenges and threats from both internal and external sources and from that analysis, identified practical aspirations for the future of our organization while being mindful of priority, effort and potential impact of each potential project.

In the end, we settled on three major strategic directions for the plan. These three would address: educating potential advocates; increasing the capacity of the NCLC and strengthening the governance of the NCLC. Each of these three areas was detailed in a series of one-, two- and three-year goals and action steps. For example, a first-year goal of the Education Initiative is to foster a closer relationship with, and recruit individuals at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Nebraska Wesleyan University, who are willing to become advocates of the Coalition. In years two and three, additional contacts will be sought at other locations – Wayne State College, Northeast Community College in Norfolk, Doane University and Hastings College. Likewise, first-year goals for Strengthening Governance are to review our

bylaws and establish several more formalized committees within the organization. This has been nearly completed. As an example for the Increasing Capacity strategic direction, we plan to hire a part-time development director and produce formal development plans. An experienced individual has been identified and target organizations are in our sights. As a practical matter, all of the goals for each of the three areas are assigned to individuals on the board and their progress is tracked quarterly.

As we hoped, this much more formalized strategic plan has had a noticeable impact on our advancement in the six months since we initiated the structured process. Indeed, many of the first-year goals have been accomplished or are well underway, but there is still much work to do. We look forward to continuing to act upon our strategic plan and have confidence that our efforts will be rewarded by enhanced promotion, support and advocacy for the research that will promote the quality of life and economy of Nebraska.

## NEWS & NOTES

### Top 5 Predictions for Stem Cells & Regenerative Medicine in 2018

#### *The Niche - Knoepfler Lab Stem Cell Blog*

Every year, Dr. Paul Knoepfler writes a blog on what he sees as the top 20 predictions for the year in the area of regenerative medicine. Five of his predictions are listed here.

- 1 Combo cell-gene therapy continues to be hot, but with both ups and downs.** This could come in the way of combination cell-gene therapy, drug approval or possibly additional epidermal regeneration.
- 2 At least 20 total FDA Regenerative Medicine Advanced Therapy designations (RMATs).** An RMAT designation does not equal FDA-approval overall, but according to Dr. Knoepfler it should mean the investigational therapy has solid data behind it and is promising.
- 3 More iPSC movement in Japan.** More IPS cell regenerative medicine progress in Japan, including one new clinical trial beyond Masayo Takahashi’s work.
- 4 iPSC step forward in USA too.** A major step forward for IPS cell clinical trial efforts in the U.S., probably at least one notable investigational new drug application.

#### **5 In utero experimental interventions make news.**

There is a lot of interest in having impact on developing fetuses during pregnancy including via stem cells. At least one high-profile study or news development.

You may find the complete list on Dr. Knoepfler’s site at [ipscell.com](http://ipscell.com).

### One Neuron at a Time

November 13, 2017

*Tom O’Connor, UNMC public relations*

Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures board member Joan Squires is on a mission. She wants to find a cure for Lewy body dementia, placing her faith in the neurological researchers at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

“It is my fervent hope that a cure can be developed, so that others don’t have to experience the challenges and heartbreak of this disease,” said Joan Squires,

whose husband, Tom Fay, died from the disease.

The University of Nebraska Foundation has established the Nebraska Neuroscience Alliance Endowed Award Fund to help UNMC researchers find a cure for neurological diseases such as Lewy body dementia.

Fay, who was 75, battled the disease for 14 years. Squires said it was like “saying goodbye one neuron at a time.” Although he remained active for many years, it was a disease that was extremely difficult to manage and nothing could stop its progression.

Lewy body dementia is one of the most common causes of dementia. It usually begins between the ages of 50 and 85 and is progressive. There is no cure. It can be difficult to diagnose, as it has symptoms similar to Parkinson’s disease. Abnormal structures, called Lewy bodies, build up in areas of the brain and affect areas that regulate behavior, cognition and movement.



Attendees at the Nebraska Neuroscience Alliance dinner included (left-right): Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D., Sean Joseph, Ph.D., California Institute for Biomedical Research, Serge Przedborski, M.D., Ph.D., Columbia University Institute for Genomic Medicine, Howard Gendelman, M.D., Joan Squires, Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D., and Chris Kratochvil, M.D. Drs. Joseph and Przedborski both spoke at the event, while Squires received an award for her neuroscience advocacy.

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