



## Groundbreaking Childhood Cancer Collaborative Comes to the U.S. for the First Time

**January 29, 2020** – For the first time the U.S. played host to an innovative new research collaborative aimed at finding cures for childhood cancer. The ACCELERATE collaborative, which now includes European and U.S. stakeholders, gathered in Philadelphia for the first U.S. Pediatric Strategy Forum on January 23 and 24. ACCELERATE’S strategy meeting was supported in part by Philadelphia-based childhood cancer research foundation, Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF).

The **Pediatric Strategy Forum** discussed a new and exciting class of drugs for children with cancer – epigenetic modifiers. Mutations in chromatin associated proteins or transcription factors are major causes of childhood cancer and epigenetic modifiers reprogram cancer cells. The Forum made plans how to best develop these new drugs in the future to give the children the best chance of benefitting from them.

Started in 2015, the **ACCELERATE international multi-stakeholder** platform began as a collaboration of the European Society for Pediatric Oncology (SIOP Europe) and the Innovative Therapies for Children with Cancer Consortium (ITCC). It has since expanded to include European and North American stakeholders focused on the development of new pediatric cancer drugs. An international steering committee now includes U.S. researchers, industry, regulators and patient advocates.

ACCELERATE offers a unique and innovative promise in providing answers to some of the most vexing challenges in childhood cancer. In contrast to many conventional medical/scientific platforms, **ACCELERATE features a deliberate problem-solving structure** in which alternatives to specific treatments are posed, deliberated and a consensus treatment plan emerges from deliberations by the full range of stakeholders.

Despite major progress over the last 50 years (80% of young people with malignancies are disease free at 5 years after diagnosis), cancer remains the most common cause of death by disease for children and adolescents.

Increased **international collaboration** provides for a more efficient, and ultimately, effective, strategy in addressing a diverse set of rare diseases with limited patient populations. Consequently, ACCELERATE focuses on international coordination of clinical approaches to advance treatment in subsets of disease.

“New, innovative oncology drugs with new mechanisms of action are already available for adult cancers and can be more effective than traditional drugs in several refractory malignancies,” said **Gilles Vassal**, ACCELERATE Chair and Head of Clinical Research at Gustave Roussy Cancer Center in France. “This is why selecting among new mechanism of action-based agents for safer and more effective treatments is a priority for all of us working to ensure the best possible care and outcomes for all children with cancer.”

U.S. representation on the **ACCELERATE Steering Committee** includes Dr. Peter Adamson, chair of the Children’s Oncology Group (COG), Dr. Gregory Reaman of the FDA Center for Oncology Excellence, Susan Weiner, Founder and Director of Children’s Cancer Cause and Dr Alberto Pappo, St Jude Children’s Research Hospital and chair of the Pediatric Oncology Drugs Advisory Committee at the FDA. ACCELERATE’s strategy meeting was partially supported by Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation.

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**About ACCELERATE**

ACCELERATE is a non-profit organisation under Belgian law, supported by SIOP Europe, ITCC and several other non-profit organizations. ACCELERATE provides a transparent forum to discuss and address, in a timely fashion, overarching issues in the development of innovative anticancer medicines for children and adolescents with cancer. The ultimate goal is improvement in outcomes for children and adolescents with cancer. Patients’ and parents’ organisations, academic pediatric oncologists and hematologists, researchers, representatives from biopharma companies, regulatory networks and health technology assessment authorities are all equal members of ACCELERATE. Further information: [www.accelerate-platform.org](http://www.accelerate-platform.org)

**About Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation**

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) emerged from the front yard lemonade stand of 4-year-old Alexandra “Alex” Scott, who was fighting cancer and wanted to raise money to find cures for all children with cancer. Her spirit and determination inspired others to support her cause, and when she passed away at the age of 8, she had raised \$1 million. Since then, the Foundation bearing her name has evolved into a national fundraising movement. Today, ALSF is one of the leading funders of pediatric cancer research in the U.S. and Canada raising more than \$200 million so far, funding nearly 1,000 research projects and providing programs to families affected by childhood cancer. For more information, visit [AlexsLemonade.org](http://AlexsLemonade.org)