Stephanie Halene, MD, PhD
Nikolai Podoltsev, MD, PhD

In June 2013, Nikolai Podoltsev, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine (Hematology), began caring for newly-diagnosed patient Fred DeLuca, co-founder of the global SUBWAY restaurant chain. Dr. Podoltsev and other specialists at Smilow Cancer Hospital cared for Mr. DeLuca as he underwent treatment for leukemia leading to remission, which allowed him to proceed with an allogeneic stem cell transplant under the care of Stuart Seropian, Professor of Medicine (Hematology) and Associate Director of the Myeloid Malignancies Program, they hope to bring their research to a clinical trial by this fall. New therapies for MDS are needed. Currently the only cure is a bone marrow transplant, which isn’t possible for everyone.

Dr. Podoltsev and Halene are excited that the new Center will facilitate recruitment of new faculty and provide grants to young scientists eager to develop promising ideas. It will also foster collaborations between clinicians and basic scientists to test new therapies. A major focus of the Center will be a bio-specimen bank of samples taken from patients with blood malignancies.

“We will be able to annotate patient samples much better, which will lead to new hypotheses, new approaches, new ideas on what to tackle,” said Dr. Halene.

It’s all happening because Fred DeLuca became Dr. Podoltsev’s patient in 2013. “I sent him to both Dana Farber and Memorial Sloan Kettering for opinions, and he saw very distinguished leukemia physicians,” said Dr. Podoltsev; “but he always came back. I think this new Center in Mrs. DeLuca’s response to the care he received here, not just by me but by Stephanie and the nurses and our transplant team and the whole staff. We’re extremely appreciative of her generosity and looking forward to share the results of the research the Center will enable.”

We’re extremely grateful for the DeLuca Center for Innovation in Hematology Research and look forward to sharing the results of new research the Center will enable.