

Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure



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Mission

Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure (ABC²) is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that invests in brain tumor research with the ultimate mission of finding a cure for brain cancer in the fastest possible manner. It believes that a nimble, focused, and aggressive entrepreneurial model will increase the number of therapies discovered and then enable those therapies to be more rapidly driven into the clinic. Partners range from medical research centers to early-stage biotechnology companies to large multi-national pharmaceutical companies. ABC² was founded by brothers Dan and Steve Case after Dan was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2001.

Strategy/Approach

ABC² recognizes that few biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies are willing to invest research and development dollars toward brain cancer research due to its relative rarity. By “buying down the risk” in the drug discovery process, ABC² is able to speed medical progress.

It applies entrepreneurial approaches to medical research and bridges the gap that often exists between academic researchers, who make scientific discoveries, and the companies that bring those treatments to patients. ABC² funds projects at each stage of the therapeutic development pipeline to ensure promising leads are advanced as quickly as possible. Its pre-clinical screening program breaks down barriers to entry, its research grants focus on novel therapies, and its company investments bring the most promising treatments to patients quickly.

Research Portfolio

ABC² has awarded more than \$20 million in research funding to highly qualified research investigators and physician-scientists from 42 institutions. Rather than simply issuing a yearly request for proposals, ABC² regularly scouts research labs for advances that can be translated into new treatments for patients.

- **Enabling Research** – Academic research awards fund projects that range from the discovery of important biomarkers to validating genomic targets.
- **Pre-Clinical Research** – In partnership with Duke University, ABC² aggressively screens compounds to identify promising drug candidates.
- **Phase I and II Clinical Trials** – Works with researchers, doctors, and companies to move potential therapies into clinical trials as quickly as possible.
- **Phase III Clinical Trials** – Works with the Food and Drug Administration, National Cancer Institute (NCI), and doctors to bring the most effective therapies to patients.

Partnership Practices

ABC² partners with research foundations, government agencies, medical philanthropists, and biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies.

To encourage companies to develop new therapies, ABC² invests in early-stage clinical work that tests whether a particular drug might be effective in treating brain cancer. Investments are designed to accelerate clinical trials and catalyze further funding. Examples include:

- **AGIOS Pharmaceuticals™** – ABC²'s investment is enabling Agios to explore whether the mutated IDH1 gene has an enzyme activity consistent with a cancer-causing gene, or oncogene.
- **Exosome Diagnostics** – Exosome Diagnostics and ABC² are collaborating with leading academic medical centers to accelerate the clinical validation of Exosome Diagnostic's biofluid-based diagnostic technology that could revolutionize the way brain cancer is monitored and treated.
- **Genentech** – In partnership with Genentech, ABC² helped develop Genentech's drug Avastin to treat brain cancer patients. ABC² funded the early-stage research and clinical trial work to test the efficacy of Avastin to treat brain tumors. Avastin was the first new FDA-approved drug to treat brain cancer in a decade.
- **Regulus™** – In 2011, ABC² partnered with Regulus and Samsung Medical Center to support the initiation of a new discovery effort in microRNA therapeutics for the treatment of glioblastoma multiforme, the most common and aggressive brain tumor in humans.
- **Tocagen**—ABC² funded Tocagen's virally-based drug delivery and treatment system for brain cancer, being the first non-profit to do so. The virus selectively spreads to cancer tissue while not harming normal tissue, like a Trojan horse. This project is now in the clinical trial phase.

Financials

ABC² is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit health organization. The most recent financial information available is from 2011.¹

Year ended 12/31/11:

- Revenue: \$1,872,056
- Assets: \$2,223,478 (market value)
- Grants: \$813,600
- Gifts received: \$1,871,363
- Expenditures: \$1,979,161

¹ Information obtained from Foundation Center Directory, <http://fconline.foundationcenter.org>, July 2013.

Key Accomplishments

- Distributed more than \$20 million through project grants from 2001 to 2013.
- With the advocacy support of ABC2, the NCI chose to focus on glioblastoma as the first cancer to be thoroughly profiled at a molecular level.
- In partnership with Genentech, ABC2 helped develop Genentech's drug Avastin to treat brain cancer patients. ABC2 funded the early-stage research and clinical trial work to test the efficacy of Avastin to treat brain tumors. Avastin was the first new FDA-approved drug to treat brain cancer in a decade.
- ABC2's investment is enabling Agios Pharmaceuticals to explore whether the mutated IDH1 gene has an enzyme activity consistent with a cancer-causing gene, or oncogene.
- ABC2 funded Tocagen's virally-based drug delivery and treatment system for brain cancer, being the first non-profit to do so. The virus selectively spreads to cancer tissues while not harming normal tissue, like a Trojan horse. This project is now in the clinical trial phase.
- Since 2011, together with the Florida Center for Brain Tumor Research, ABC2 granted more than \$1 million toward new brain tumor research in the state of Florida. Part of the funding is helping to fuel the new brain tumor immunotherapy program at the University of Florida.
- Funded efforts by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco to test a brain cancer vaccine tailored to individual subjects. The project is now in the clinical trial phase.
- Annual scientific retreat convenes preeminent scientists and clinicians, as well as patients, brain tumor advocacy groups, industry leaders, and government officials to advance innovations in brain cancer research and foster strategic collaboration.
- Launched the ABC2 Fellows Program for young scientific investigators. They examine business development and strategy issues within pharmaceutical, biotechnology, financial, and philanthropic organizations.

Leadership

Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure is governed by a **Board of Directors** that includes co-founder and current chair Steve Case. The board is supported by a group of science advisors and a permanent professional staff.

- **CEO:** Max Wallace, Max.Wallace@abc2.org
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