

**VCU**

## Leaders' Update

### A message from Deputy Director Steven Grossman

Dear colleagues,

Identifying novel therapeutics arising from Massey science is of the highest priority for Massey Cancer Center. To that end, Dr. Steve Grant and I are spearheading the establishment of a formalized process that supports a translational pipeline for drug development at Massey.

In February, we surveyed Massey members so that we could identify who had small molecules, biologics, antibodies or targets under development in our laboratories that could benefit from additional support. Thank you for participating in that survey – we learned of some impressive science happening here.

The responses were reviewed, and after follow-up information was collected, about a half dozen were chosen for further evaluation. An internal scientific review will occur soon to narrow down the selections, and then an external scientific review will help us to select one or two of the most promising concepts to which Massey can direct more resources to support the further development of impactful molecules.

Candidate molecules will be evaluated based on scientific merit, novelty, clinical need and benefit, likelihood of success, cost/benefit ratio, and current stage of development. Also of importance is whether the candidate molecule is likely to culminate in tangible evidence of translation – i.e., development of a lead compound/biologic ready for ADME/TOX studies with main categories identified (lead optimization, advanced disease specific pre-clinical modeling) – by the time of the next NCI review of Massey's Cancer Center Support Grant in 2021.

Ultimately, the goal of these efforts is to develop the first Massey born and raised cancer drug and to build a pipeline to continue drug discovery and development. I am excited by this prospect and to be part of it. I look forward to updating you on our progress.

Regards,

Steven R. Grossman, M.D., Ph.D.  
Deputy director