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Arizona Cancer Center and Raytheon Company receive Science Foundation Arizona grant for cancer-detection technology study

TUCSON, Arizona (December 16, 2008) – The Arizona Cancer Center and Raytheon Company have been awarded a research grant from Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) to study ways to adapt satellite remote sensing technology, now used to image a battlefield, to hopefully one day image the human body for medical purposes. .

"Early detection of melanoma and other skin cancers should be a top priority in the public health system," says Clara Curiel, MD, director of the Pigmented Lesion Clinic and Multidisciplinary Oncology Program at the Arizona Cancer Center's Skin Cancer Institute and assistant professor of dermatology at The University of Arizona College of Medicine. "To date, most body mapping systems for tracking melanoma require that a health care provider make a subjective visual comparison of photographs to determine if significant change has occurred. The research program funded by Raytheon and SFAz will support efforts to apply cutting-edge technology to this challenging medical need."

Raytheon Company is a technology leader in defense and homeland security. Systems Engineering Senior Manager Karleen Seybold has been leading a team of Raytheon Photon Research Associates engineers to adapt remote sensing algorithms for early detection. With research work continuing, a search is under way for development partners experienced in medical imaging to help advance the project and the technology.

Additionally, Raytheon and the Arizona Cancer Center also will work closely with the Food and Drug Administration as the project evolves. Seybold and Curiel are co-principal investigators of the grant.

"The grant allows us to continue this important research," says Michael W. Booen, a Raytheon Missile Systems vice president. "Imagine one day being able to give physicians the same kind of situational awareness – the ability to track even subtle changes in the appearance of their patients' skin – that we now provide to commanders in theater. It's an exciting opportunity."

"Cancer prevention and early detection of skin cancer is a critical role of the Arizona Cancer Center," says David S. Alberts, MD, director of the Arizona Cancer Center and UA Regents Professor of Medicine, Pharmacology, Nutritional Sciences, Public Health and BIO5. "The fact that we can partner with Raytheon Company and Science Foundation Arizona to potentially improve early detection efforts would be a benefit to our patients and to our entire state."

(More)

"This partnership represents SFAz's unique skill in bringing together the research and development strengths of organizations as seemingly different as a defense contractor and a cancer research center to help incubate innovation that has both positive economic and social returns," says William C. Harris president and CEO of Science Foundation Arizona. "Our ability to compete and prosper as Arizonans and Americans in the 21st century is dependent upon our aptitude to think creatively and strategically in building these types of alliances."

The Arizona Cancer Center is the state's premier National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center. With primary locations at The University of Arizona in Tucson and in Scottsdale, the Center has more than a dozen research and education offices throughout the state and 300 physician and scientist members working to prevent and cure cancer. For more information, please go to www.azcc.arizona.edu

About Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz)
With the mission of spurring new innovation in Arizona and developing a diversified, robust knowledge driven research and education infrastructure, SFAz, a 501(C)(3) public/private partnership, has to date awarded $433.6 million in 59 innovation investments in information and communications technology, sustainable systems and biomedical research. In just one year, these investments have demonstrated clear strategic advantages to Arizona by attracting an additional $43.8 million in outside research dollars, seeding the development of eight new companies, and fostering science, engineering and math skills in more than 10,800 students statewide.

Raytheon Company, with 2007 sales of $21.3 billion, is a technology leader specializing in defense, homeland security and other government markets throughout the world. With a history of innovation spanning 86 years, Raytheon provides state-of-the-art electronics, mission systems integration and other capabilities in the areas of sensing; effects; and command, control, communications and intelligence systems, as well as a broad range of mission support services. With headquarters in Waltham, Mass., Raytheon employs 72,000 people worldwide.

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