

## **KL2 Scholar appointed to National Cancer Institute (NCI) Council of Research Advocates**

The Institute for the Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS) KL2 Scholar, Greg Aune, MD, PhD, was appointed to the NCI Council of Research Advocates. The announcement was made at the White House on Friday, September 19, 2014, as part of a closed briefing about pediatric cancer.



Dr. Aune is an assistant professor of pediatrics, specializing in hematology-oncology, at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. He recently concluded a Clinical and Translational Science Award IIMS-sponsored Mentored Career Development (KL2) Award, where he conducted research to identify candidate regulatory miRNAs in cardiac fibroblasts. This research has resulted in a three-year, \$330,000, St. Baldrick's Foundation Scholar Award and a \$250,000 Hyundai Hope on Wheels research grant, each of which will contribute to his research on how cancer therapies in young patients affect the heart later in life.

Dr. Aune's research and advocacy in cancer survivorship have roots in personal experience. He was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma as a teenager and understands first-hand the health problems experienced by long-term survivors that are related to the treatments used to successfully treat the cancer. He plans to use this two-year Research Advocate appointment to align the interests of the pediatric cancer and advocacy groups with the programs at the NCI.

"My time as a KL2 Scholar played a pivotal role in my appointment to the NCI Council on Research Advocates," said Dr. Aune. "Specifically, the program developed my communication skills that have enabled me to combine my passion for treating childhood cancer with a clear and concise message summarizing why my research is important. Through close mentorship from successful senior faculty, I learned key strategies that they used to achieve their goals and can now apply these strategies to my own career."

As described by Linda McManus, PhD, who co-directs the KL2 program together with Jose Cavazos, MD, PhD, and Michael Lichtenstein, MD, "Our program is designed to enhance the research training of exceptional early career investigators. We are extremely pleased with the accomplishments of our dedicated Scholars. We believe that Dr. Aune's investigations in pediatric cancer research, together with his passion as a patient advocate, will improve outcomes to make lives better."