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To the supporters of the Karen Brown Scleroderma Foundation:

We would like to express our extreme gratitude for your support of scleroderma research and the Scleroderma Center of Excellence at Stanford University Medical Center. The money from KBS supported the completion of an innovative project identifying new markers in the blood for scleroderma patients who are more likely to develop pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), an often deadly complication of the lungs. We also discovered new markers in the blood that are elevated in scleroderma and lupus patients who have PAH, and may serve as targets for new therapies. Our next steps are to perform similar studies on blood samples from patients with scleroderma associated interstitial lung disease, another major cause of death in these patients for which there are currently no good treatments.

The grant also helped support the further growth of our Scleroderma Center. In 2004, Dr. David Fiorentino (dermatologist) initiated an autoimmune skin disease clinic and biobank at Stanford. When I joined the faculty in 2007, we began to focus our clinical and research efforts on scleroderma and related connective tissue diseases. Since that time, our patient population has more than doubled in size and we now provide comprehensive multi-disciplinary care to over 250 scleroderma patients. In addition, we are participating in several clinical trials for new therapies to treat scleroderma skin and lung disease, thus offering treatments to patients that are not otherwise available. Our tissue biobank has been instrumental in performing state-of-the-art scientific studies to better understand what causes scleroderma, and to identify subsets of patients who are more likely to improve with particular therapies.

In the coming years, we plan to continue to expand our scleroderma patient population and biobank, build upon collaborations with other scleroderma centers throughout the world, and pursue novel scientific studies with the ultimate goal of finding a cure for this devastating disease. These goals cannot be achieved without continued support from KBS and other funding agencies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Chung".

Lorinda Chung, M.D., M.S.