Vice President Joe Biden joined former New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Tuesday to announce a $125 million gift to create an institute at Johns Hopkins Medicine focused solely on promising immunotherapy research to cure cancer.

Immunotherapy is a key component of the Obama administration’s “Moonshot” initiative to cure cancer, which Biden is leading. Obama wants finding a cure for cancer to be as big as when the first man walked on the moon. Cancer specialists believe immunotherapy, a treatment which prompts the body’s immune systems to target and kill cancer cells, has the most promising path.

“If we can harness this moment, I believe we can make quantum leaps in curing cancer,” said Biden, who lost his oldest son to cancer last year and has made it a personal mission to push for a cure.

Beau Biden, the vice president’s eldest son, died last May at age 46 from brain cancer. The vice president has made it a personal mission to push efforts to find a cure. He has toured top cancer centers around the country as part of the “Moonshot” effort. He called
Bloomberg praised Biden for his commitment to the issue.

“The vice president is determined to turn that tragedy to a positive for other families and we are here to stand with him,” he said.

Gov. Larry Hogan, who was diagnosed and treated with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma early in his term but says he’s now cancer-free, was also on hand along with members of the state’s congressional delegation and local elected officials. Hogan praised the potential of Hopkins’ new venture.

“Over the past year I have come to appreciate and understand the work of facilities like this in ways that I could have never imagined,” he said.

Cancer ‘prehab’ may provide better post-op outcomes

Bloomberg said there is more promise than ever to finding a cure.

“We still have a ways to go... and a cure won’t come overnight,” he said. “But we have turned a corner.”