Headlines

Appropriators Deliver on Center Directors' Call for NIH Increase

On April 30, House and Senate leaders reached a bipartisan deal to fund the government at updated levels through September. The $1 trillion budget deal must pass both Chambers and be signed by the president before the Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on Friday, May 5. The bill would provide the National Institutes of Health (NIH) with $34.084 billion for Fiscal Year 2017, an increase of $2 billion over Fiscal Year 2016, including the $352 million allocated in the 21st Century Cures Act. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) would receive $5.689 billion in Fiscal Year 2017, including $300 million from the 21st Century Cures Act to support the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot Initiative. The NCI amount reflects an increase of nearly $175 million over Fiscal Year 2016.

Last week, 80 cancer center directors signed letters to House and Senate appropriators, urging them to put forth a final spending package which includes an increase in NIH funding for Fiscal Year 2017. AACI is grateful for the efforts of leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, as they delivered on a strong federal investment for the NIH and NCI. more...

British Columbia Cancer Center Joins AICI

The Association of American Cancer Institutes welcomes its second Canadian member, BC Cancer Agency, in Vancouver, British Columbia. Under the leadership of Malcolm J. Moore, MD, BC Cancer Agency provides cancer services to approximately five million people in British Columbia, with 25,000 new cancer cases per year. Its research ranges from basic molecular and genetic studies to epidemiological and clinical research on cancer prevention, early diagnosis, molecular characteristics of the cancer process and new treatments for cancer using drugs and radiotherapy. more...

AACI Selects Carl June as 2017 Distinguished Scientist

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) will present the 2017 AACI Distinguished Scientist Award to Carl H. June, MD, on October 16, during the AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting, in Washington, DC.

Dr. June is director of translational research at the Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania, director of the Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy and the Center for Cellular Immunotherapies, and Richard W. Vague Professor in Immunotherapy, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2011, his research team published findings which represented the first successful and sustained demonstration of the use of gene transfer therapy to treat cancer. more...

AACI/AACR/ASCO to Honor Reps. Carson and McKinley

On Thursday, May 4 AACI will co-host a visit to Capitol Hill with the...
American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

The annual Hill Day reception will kick off the event on Wednesday, May 3, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in Room 2060 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Representatives André Carson (D-IN) and David McKinley (R-WV) will be recognized for their outstanding leadership on behalf of cancer research. Both members of Congress have been outspoken supporters of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Representatives Carson and McKinley will accept their awards in person.

Please contact Jennifer Pegher, Director of Government Relations at AACI, with questions regarding Hill Day. more...

Updated CCSG Guidelines on Agenda for CRI Meeting

Set for July 12-13, in Chicago, the 9th Annual AACI Clinical Research Initiative Meeting will feature a panel discussion on "Updated Cancer Center Support Grants Guidelines". Presenters will discuss revisions to the grant guidelines and instructions for renewing the P30 grant. In addition, attendees will hear about lessons learned and practical advice from two centers that have recently completed their CCSG competing renewal under the new guidelines.

Information on the meeting, including the program and electronic registration is available on the AACI CRI meeting website. Please contact Jaime Anderson with questions. Potential sponsors should contact Kate Burroughs at 412-647-3844 regarding commercial support opportunities. more...

Early Registration Ends Tomorrow for Two AACI Meetings

Early registration ends tomorrow for the 9th Annual AACI Clinical Research Initiative (CRI) Meeting and the 2017 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting!

Details about the CRI meeting and registration information can be found here: aaci-cancer.org/cri_meeting. Details about the AACI/CCAF meeting and registration information are here: aaci-cancer.org/annual_meeting. For questions and more information, please contact Jaime Anderson. more...

News from the Centers

Awards & Honors  Grants & Gifts  Leadership Transitions  Research Highlights  Other News

Awards & Honors

Allison Named one of TIME’s 100 Most Influential People
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center Chair of Immunology Jim Allison, PhD, whose pivotal insight to attack cancer by treating the immune system instead of the tumor revived cancer immunotherapy, has been named to the 2017 TIME 100. His approach launched a completely new way to treat these diseases, improving patient outcomes and transforming the course of cancer research. Dr. Allison received the 2016 AACI Distinguished Scientist Award. more...
Investigators in Experimental Heart Stem Cell and Cancer Therapies Recognized

**Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute**

Two prominent Cedars-Sinai investigators - one leading the development of biological treatments for heart disease, the other spearheading the design and analysis of clinical trials for cancer research - were inducted April 3 into the Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars. Eduardo Marbán, MD, PhD, director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, and Steven Piantadosi, MD, PhD, director of the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute at Cedars-Sinai, are among a select group of medical researchers to receive the honor.  

more...

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**Sigal Honored at LUNGevity's Celebration of Hope**

**Friends of Cancer Research**

Friends of Cancer Research (Friends) Chairperson & Founder, Ellen V. Sigal, received the Face of Hope award at LUNGevity's Celebration of Hope, April 21. The Face of Hope award is presented to an individual who recognizes the needs of those living with lung cancer and is actively making a difference. Ms. Sigal founded Friends more than 20 years ago to bring together leaders from every healthcare sector to power advances in science policy and regulation to help speed lifesaving treatments to patients.  

more...

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**Pietenpol Named as a Chief Scientific Advisor for Susan G. Komen**

**Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center**

Jennifer Pietenpol, PhD director of Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, has been named a Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) for the nonprofit breast cancer organization Susan G. Komen. She joins George Sledge Jr., MD, professor of Medicine at Stanford University Medical Center, in the CSA role, including responsibility for guiding the Komen Scientific Advisory Board.  

more...

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**Researcher Receives Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Award**

**Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer Institute**

Cleveland Clinic physician-researcher Nima Sharifi, MD, was recognized as a Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement awardee by the Clinical Research Forum, a national organization of senior researchers and thought leaders from the nation’s leading academic health centers. Dr. Sharifi was selected for his research published in the October 2016 edition of The Lancet Oncology, which showed for the first time that patients with advanced prostate cancer are more likely to die earlier from their disease if they carry a specific testosterone-related genetic abnormality.  

more...

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**Rathmell Named to ASCI Leadership Post**

**Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center**

W. Kimryn Rathmell, MD, PhD, director of the Division of Hematology/Oncology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, has been named vice president of The American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI). Dr. Rathmell will serve a four-year term, initially as vice president, then president-elect in 2018, president in 2019, and immediate past president of The ASCI in 2020.  

more...

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**Huntsman Investigators Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences**

**Huntsman Cancer Institute**

University of Utah professors Bradley R. Cairns, PhD, professor and chair of Oncological Sciences and senior director of Basic Science at Huntsman Cancer Institute; Dana Carroll, PhD, distinguished professor of Biochemistry and HCI investigator; and Christopher D. Hacon, PhD, distinguished professor of Mathematics, have been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Cairns was honored for his work examining how chromatin, the structures that package chromosomal DNA, switch genes on or off. He is working to understand how changes in chromatin affect cellular mechanisms that can lead to cancer development.  

more...
Olopade Recognized with ASCO Humanitarian Award
The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center
Olufunmilayo I. Olopade, MBBS, FACP, FASCO, has been awarded the American Society of Clinical Oncology's (ASCO) 2017 Humanitarian Award. Dr. Olopade is a medical oncologist and expert in breast cancer. Her laboratory research is focused on defining molecular mechanisms of cancer through studies of genetic and nongenetic factors contributing to tumor progression in at-risk individuals from diverse populations. more...

Sheppard, Craik Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences
UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
Biochemist Charles Craik, PhD, and pulmonologist Dean Sheppard, MD, have been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Craik is professor of pharmaceutical chemistry at the School of Pharmacy and director of the Quantitative Biosciences Consortium. Sheppard, professor of medicine, is the founding director of the UCSF Lung Biology Center and chief of the Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy and Sleep Medicine. more...

Grants & Gifts

Center for Inherited Disease Research Receives $213 Million of New Funding
Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center
The Johns Hopkins Center for Inherited Disease Research (CIDR) marked its 20-year history supporting large-scale scientific collaboration by securing funding to the center through 2023. CIDR successfully competed for a seven-year contract from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) providing up to $213 million in research funding. The renewal contract enables NIH-funded researchers to use CIDR’s sequencing, high-throughput genotyping, analysis and informatics services for a wide array of studies exploring genetic contributions to human health and disease. more...

SU2C Names Top Researchers to $12 Million Colorectal Cancer Dream Team
American Association for Cancer Research
Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) has announced the formation of a "Dream Team" of top researchers to take on one of the toughest challenges in cancer research and treatment: colorectal cancer, which is expected to claim the lives of more than 50,000 Americans this year. The announcement was made at a special event during the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, SU2C's Scientific Partner. more...

$11.2 Million Awarded to Launch New Center for Cancer and Metabolism
UK Markey Cancer Center
The University of Kentucky was recently awarded a prestigious Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence grant to study the metabolism of cancer from the National Institutes of General Medical Sciences, part of the National Institutes of Health. The $11.2 million grant will fund UK’s Center for Cancer and Metabolism over the next five years. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, an advocate of the 21st Century Cures Act, contacted NIH Director Francis S. Collins on behalf of UK’s grant application. more...

Krieger Receives $3 Million for Research to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening
University of Florida Health Cancer Center
University of Florida STEM Translational Communication Center Director Janice Krieger, PhD, and a team of researchers have been awarded a $3.04 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to test the efficacy of using virtual technology to increase colorectal cancer screening among rural and minority patients. more...

Brownson Awarded $2.6 Million Grant for Cancer Research
Siteman Cancer Center
Health researcher Ross Brownson, PhD, has received a five-year, $2.6 million grant from the National Cancer Institute for a study examining poor
implementation of cancer-control programs. He will identify why cancer-control programs at state public health departments continue when there isn't a solid evidence base for them, and why some programs don't continue when there is. more...

Leadership Transitions

George Named Associate Director of Clinical Investigation
University of Florida Health Cancer Center
The UF Health Cancer Center (UHFCC) has announced that Thomas George, MD, FACP, has been appointed the center’s associate director of clinical investigation. In this role, Dr. George will oversee the administration and management of the UHFCC clinical trials office, establish standard operating procedures for National Cancer Institute (NCI) protocol reviews and management systems (the scientific review and data safety and integrity assurances of the UHFCC) and be involved with the NCI core grant writing team. more...

Research Highlights

New Function for ADAR1 in Protecting Stressed Cells from Apoptotic Death Discovered
The Wistar Institute
The RNA editing protein ADAR1 was first discovered several decades ago. Now, scientists at The Wistar Institute have identified a new function for the protein: It stops cells that have been exposed to stressors such as ultraviolet (UV) radiation from dying. Kazuko Nishikura, PhD, was senior author of the study. more...

Images of Health Risks Make Indoor Tanning Messages More Effective
UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center
Although the health risks associated with indoor tanning are clear, tanning bed use among college-aged women is still popular. A new study by UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers suggests that adding images depicting the longer-term impacts of indoor tanning might be an effective health risk communication strategy. The researchers report that anti-tanning bed messages with images showing some of the longer-term effects, such as skin cancer or wrinkles, produced greater negative emotional reactions and higher ratings of effectiveness in a survey of female college students. more...

Study: Worse Survival When Specific Thyroid Cancers Spread to Bone
University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center
In the largest-known study on bone metastases in thyroid cancer, researchers at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center found that patients with follicular and medullary thyroid cancer had the highest rate of cancer-related bone lesions and fractures and an increased risk of death. more...

New Research Investigates Strawberries to Fight Oral Cancer in Heavy Smokers
The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
James Cancer Hospital & Solove Research Institute
A new pilot study conducted at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute hypothesized that they can, and initial data reveals some intriguing differences in the oral microenvironment of smokers versus non-smokers. For this study, a multidisciplinary team made up of experts in functional foods, oncology, and public health conducted an early phase clinical trial to
establish the differences in salivary enzyme activities on the phytochemical components of strawberries between smokers and non-smokers. Researchers also analyzed the expression of a select group of genes associated smoking and increased risk of oral cancer. more...

Team Identifies Tumor Marker for Aggressive Ovarian Cancer
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Patients who expressed the tumor antigen NY-ESO-1 had more aggressive cancers and were more likely to die early from their disease, according to a large study conducted by Roswell Park Cancer Institute researchers. NY-ESO-1 is one of the few tumor antigens that have restricted expression in normal tissue but become aberrantly expressed in epithelial ovarian cancers and other solid tumors. J. Brian Szender, MD, MPH, was the study's first author. more...

Getting to the Root of the Problem by Targeting Cancer Stem Cells
The University of Kansas Cancer Center
Chemotherapy treatment targets and kills cancer cells in the body. However, even after treatment, some cancer cells may remain in the patient's system undetected. A research team comprised of members from KU Cancer Center, Stowers Institute for Medical Research, and Children's Mercy are looking at ways to target cancer stem cells to ensure that once a cancer patient goes into remission, they are not at risk of their cancer returning. more...

Nanoparticle Vaccine Has Potential as Immunotherapy to Fight Multiple Cancer Types
Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Researchers from UT Southwestern Medical Center have developed a first-of-its-kind nanoparticle vaccine immunotherapy that targets several different cancer types. The nanovaccine consists of tumor antigens - tumor proteins that can be recognized by the immune system - inside a synthetic polymer nanoparticle. Nanoparticle vaccines deliver minuscule particulates that stimulate the immune system to mount an immune response. The goal is to help people's own bodies fight cancer. more...

Are Oncologists Jumping the Gun with the 21-Gene Assay?
University of Colorado Cancer Center
The 21-gene recurrence score (RS) assay, Oncotype DX, determines a score that estimates the likelihood of distant recurrence of disease in women with early-stage estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancer; this score is used to assess the benefit of adjuvant chemotherapy. RS testing is not recommended for women with intermediate- or high-risk, node-positive breast cancer because significant evidence exists that patients in that population benefit from adjuvant chemotherapy. That said, a recent study out of the University of Colorado Cancer Center finds that oncologists are indeed using the RS assay in patients with high-risk disease and, in some cases, foregoing adjuvant chemotherapy as a result. more...

Basket Trial for Experimental Drug Shows Promising Early Results
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
At this year's meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in Washington, DC, a multicenter international team led by David Hyman, MD, reported findings from a phase II basket trial of an experimental drug called neratinib, which targets a protein called HER2. All patients treated in this study had a mutation in the HER2 gene, although the specific mutation differed from patient to patient. The study was the largest of its kind to evaluate the effectiveness of targeting these HER2 gene mutations. more...

Parental Smoking Linked to Genetic Changes Found in Childhood Cancer
UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
Smoking by either parent helps promote genetic deletions in children that are associated with the development and progression of the most common type of childhood cancer, according to research headed by UC San Francisco. While the strongest associations were found in children whose parents smoked during their infancy, these deletions were also
Second Cancers Deadlier in Young Patients

Second cancers in children and adolescents and young adults (AYA) are far deadlier than they are in older adults and may partially account for the relatively poor outcomes of cancer patients ages 15-39 overall, a new study by UC Davis researchers has found. The study also found that survival after almost all types of cancer is much higher when the cancer occurs as a primary malignancy than if it is a second cancer, and these survival differences are most pronounced in patients under age 40. Theresa Keegan, PhD, MS, is the study's lead author.

Nanoparticle Treatment Could Improve Immunotherapy Against Cancer

Researchers at the University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center have discovered a potential novel strategy for improving drugs that unleash the immune system against cancer -- by binding two compounds to a nanoparticle. In preliminary findings, researchers report on a preclinical study into the use of nanoparticles to improve the efficacy of immunotherapy drugs known as checkpoint inhibitors. They are using the nanoparticles to pair immunotherapy treatments with a type of investigational compound known as a T-cell agonist. Andrew Wang, MD, is senior author of the study.

Promising New Results in Lung Cancer Research

Investigators at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson, led by Bo Lu, MD, together with colleagues at the Medical College of Wisconsin and Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Tennessee, have uncovered a new regulatory pathway with important implications for lung cancer. The study centers on the Insulin-like Growth Factor Binding Protein 3 (IGFBP3), which influences cell growth through the Insulin-like Growth Factor 1 (IGF1) signaling pathway. Previous work indicated that low serum levels of IGFBP3 are associated with higher risk for several cancer types, including prostate, colorectal, and lung cancer, indicating that IGFBP3 might have an anti-tumor protective function.

Study Shows One Lung Cancer Subtype Can Switch to Another

A new study co-authored by a researcher starting her laboratory at the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center shows that in certain genetic situations, one non-small cell lung cancer subtype can change into another subtype. This lung cancer 'lineage switching' could underlie resistance to therapeutics, and this research examines exactly how the lineage switch can happen. The work was a collaborative effort between laboratories in Kentucky, New York and Boston.

Cognitive Stimulation, Social Interactions and Physical Activity Increase Lifespan in Mice with Colon Cancer

Living in a stimulating environment has a wide range of health benefits in humans and has even been shown to fight cancer in mice, but the underlying mechanisms have been unclear. A new study reveals that cognitive stimulation, social interactions, and physical activity increase lifespan in mice with colon cancer by triggering the body's wound repair response. Melinda Angus-Hill, PhD, is senior author of the study.

Early Cancer Deaths Linked to Being Single, Living in a Poor Neighborhood

Patients in California hospitals were more likely to die within 60 days of being noted in the offspring of parents who may have quit smoking even before conception.
diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia - a cancer of the blood and bone marrow - if they were unmarried, lived in a less-affluent neighborhood or lacked health insurance. The UC Davis study also found that patients treated at a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center were more likely to survive. Gwendolyn Ho, MD, is lead author of the study. more...

Removing Thyroid, Parathyroid Glands Via the Mouth Prevents Visible Scar
The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center
A surgical team from the University of Chicago Medicine led by Raymon Grogan, MD, and Zhen Gooi, MD, was the first in the Midwest and the fourth in the United States to remove diseased thyroid or parathyroid glands - located at the front of the neck, an inch or two below the chin - using an approach that leaves no visible scar. more...

New Driver, Target in Advanced Mucosal Melanoma
University of Colorado Cancer Center
A University of Colorado Cancer Center study uses the unique resource of over 600 melanoma samples collected at the university to demonstrate, for the first time, novel mutations involved in mucosal melanoma, paving the way for therapies to treat this overlooked subtype. William A. Robinson, MD, founded the melanoma tissue bank at CU, which has grown into a major national resource for scientists studying the disease. more...

Other News

Pennsylvania Cancer Center Directors Condemn Proposed Federal Budget Cuts
Association of American Cancer Institutes
An opinion piece co-authored by the directors of Pennsylvania's five National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers titled "Proposed cuts to NIH will be a devastating blow to medicine", has been published in The Philadelphia Inquirer. The op-ed stressed the devastating impact proposed budget cuts to the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute would have on biomedical and cancer research and health care.

The co-authors were: Dario C. Altieri, MD (Wistar Institute Cancer Center); Edward Chu, MD (University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine); Richard I. Fisher, MD (Fox Chase Fox Chase Cancer Center at Temple University Health System); Karen E. Knudsen, PhD (Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University); and Chi Van Dang, MD, PhD (Abramson Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania). more...

MD Anderson, Oncora Medical Form Precision Medicine Alliance
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Oncora Medical, a precision radiation oncology software company, and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, have announced a strategic alliance focusing on building the next generation of precision medicine software for radiation oncology. During Phase I, MD Anderson oncologists and information technology professionals will work with Oncora's team of data scientists and engineers to install Oncora's Precision Radiation Oncology Platform, a software system built to assist radiation oncologists in the development of personalized treatment plans based on outcome predictions. more...

Job Opportunities

QA Manager
University of Florida Health Cancer Center more...

Research Nurse
NYU Langone Medical Center more...
Meeting Announcements

Melanoma: Advances in Therapy and Biology
On June 20, The Wistar Institute in Philadelphia will host a free scientific symposium: “The Noreen O'Neill Melanoma Research Symposium, Melanoma: Advances in Therapy and Biology” from 9am-4pm. Expanding our understanding of melanoma biology will help decode the mechanisms of innate and acquired resistance and drive the development of novel and improved targeted therapies. Learn more. Registration is required.

9th Annual AACI Clinical Research Initiative Meeting
Register today:aaci-cancer.org/cri_meeting
July 12-13, 2017
Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel

Advancing Cancer Care through Research Partnerships
2017 ASCO Research Community Forum Annual Meeting:
Advancing Cancer Care through Research Partnerships
September 24-25, 2017
ASCO Headquarters, Alexandria, VA
Mark your calendar to join the conversation this September! Space is limited, so register early. Registration will open on May 3, 2017. Stay tuned to the Forum website for meeting details.

Cancer Immunology & Immunotherapy: From Conception to Delivery
This two-day national symposium addresses recent advances in the field and should be an exciting forum for discussion and debate on the current understanding of cancer and immunology and immunotherapy.
October 12-13, 2017
NCI/National Institutes of Health
For more information visit: ncifrederick.cancer.gov/events/CancerImmunology2017

2017 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting
Register now: aaci-cancer.org/annual_meeting
October 15-17, 2017
Grand Hyatt Washington, DC