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News from the Association of American Cancer Institutes

November 2017

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MISSION

The Association is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of the nation's leading academic cancer centers.

ABOUT UPDATE

AACI *Update* is an e-newsletter for the cancer center directors and key contacts at AACI member institutions as well as individuals interested in the cancer center-related activities of AACI. AACI *Update* reports on the progress of AACI initiatives along with other AACI endeavors that benefit the cancer

Headlines

Annual Meeting Keynote Urges Vigilance on Cancer Research Funding



Clockwise, from upper left (L-R): U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Dr. Roy Jensen; Chiara D'Agostino and Drs. Yousuf Zafar, Stephen Gruber and Otis Brawley; Dr. Douglas Lowy; Stan Collender and Drs. Stanton Gerson and Karen Knudsen; Drs. Timothy Ratliff and Gerold Bepler. *Photos by Alan Lessig Photography*

Keynote speaker Stan Collender, a longtime federal budget analyst, sounded an urgent call to action as he opened the 2017 AACI Annual Meeting.

"The budget situation going on right now is a dagger pointed directly at federal support for cancer research," he told the gathering of cancer center leaders in the nation's capital. "As much as members of Congress might like to continue their support, and given their druthers they will, you've got to keep in mind that this cannot be the last time you come to Washington." [more...](#)

Research Achievement, Federal Support Highlighted at AACI Annual Meeting



Left to Right: U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO); Drs. Stanton Gerson and Carl June. *Photos by Alan Lessig Photography*

community and highlights important news and events at AACI member institutions.

SUBMISSIONS

AACI encourages member institutions to submit cancer center highlights to AACI *Update*. News briefs are linked to complete stories posted on individual cancer center websites. Please e-mail materials to aaciupdate@aaci-cancer.org. AACI reserves the right to decide whether or not materials are appropriate for inclusion.

To subscribe to AACI *Update*, please send an e-mail to aaciupdate@aaci-cancer.org with your name, title, and telephone number asking to be added to the AACI's distribution list. To unsubscribe, please send an email with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

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AACI recognized scientific achievement and federal support for cancer research at its annual meeting in October in Washington, DC.

Carl H. June, MD, received the 2017 AACI Distinguished Scientist Award for his pioneering efforts in gene transfer therapy to treat cancer. U.S. Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Bob Casey (D-PA) received 2017 AACI Public Service Awards. [more...](#)

Influx of New Directors Is Opportunity to Sharpen Focus on Research, Care

Since AACI's 2016 annual meeting, about two dozen new directors have taken on top leadership roles at AACI cancer centers. At its 2017 annual meeting in Washington, DC, AACI welcomed many of those new leaders at a breakfast on October 16.

AACI President Stanton Gerson, MD, told the new directors to utilize the programs, initiatives, and meetings hosted by AACI as they transition into their new jobs. For example, AACI could be a resource for populating a cancer center's external advisory board. [more...](#)

PCLI Meeting Examines Cancer Quality and Oncology Payment Models



Clockwise, from upper left (L-R): Panel discussion of Drs. Randall Holcombe, Adam Binder, Deborah Mayer and Therese Mulvey; Dr. Kristin Zorn; Drs. Edith Peterson Mitchell and Robert Winn. *Photos by Alan Lessig Photography*

More than 85 members of the AACI Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative (PCLI) convened during the AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting, October 15 in Washington, DC. PCLI provides a forum where AACI cancer center clinical services leaders can collect, evaluate, and share best practices that promote the efficient and effective operation of cancer center clinical and quality care programs.

This year's fifth annual PCLI meeting focused on training programs for advanced practice providers and the role of advanced practice providers (APP) in providing cancer quality care along with the understanding value based payment systems: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Quality Programs, Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, and Merit-based Incentive Programs. [more...](#)

Former AACI Board Member is New Head of National Cancer Institute



Dr. Norman E. Sharpless, joined by his wife, Dr. Julie Lund Sharpless, is sworn in as Director of the National Cancer Institute by the Department of Health and Human Services' Acting Secretary Eric D. Hargan. *Source: National Institutes of Health*

As the new director of the National Cancer Institute, Norman E. Sharpless, MD, can already claim a close working relationship with an organization that represents 97 of North America's leading cancer research centers.

Dr. Sharpless was officially sworn in October 17 as head of NCI. Before assuming the nation's top cancer federal leadership post, he served on AACI's Board of Directors and was director of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, an AACI member. [more...](#)

Altieri Joins AACI Board of Directors

AACI is pleased to welcome Dario C. Altieri, MD, to its Board of Directors. Dr. Altieri is president and chief executive officer of the Wistar Institute, and director of The Wistar Institute Cancer Center, in Philadelphia. His term will expire in October 2019. Dr. Altieri is filling the unexpired AACI board term of Norman "Ned" Sharpless, MD. Dr. Sharpless, former director of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, was sworn in as director of the National Cancer Institute on October 17. [more...](#)



AACI, ACS, CDC Recognize Pediatricians for High HPV Vaccination Rates

AACI, the American Cancer Society, Inc., and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases announced 10 award winners as part of its HPV Vaccine Is Cancer Prevention campaign.

The campaign is designed to recognize pediatricians and pediatric and family practices who adopt effective HPV vaccination practices to make a positive impact on HPV vaccination rates among patients. A panel of CDC reviewers selected one awardee in each of the 10 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regions. The winners are listed below. [more...](#)



CVS Health Foundation Awards \$1 Million in Grants to Eight AACI Centers

The CVS Health Foundation has awarded \$1 million in grants to eight Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) member cancer centers to build new smoking cessation programs or expand existing ones across the country, enabling each cancer institute to reach more at-risk patient populations. [more...](#)

73 AACI Center Directors Request Bipartisan NIH Budget, Raising Budget Caps

On November 2, 73 AACI cancer center directors sent a letter to House and Senate leaders requesting that they come to a bipartisan budget agreement that lifts the caps imposed by the Budget Control Act to allow for stable, predictable increases for the National Institutes

of Health (NIH) and National Cancer Institute (NCI). [more...](#)



News from the Centers

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Awards & Honors



Jordan Elected to National Academy of Medicine

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

V. Craig Jordan, PhD, professor of Breast Medical Oncology, has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine for his discovery of selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERMs), a class of drugs with far-reaching impact on women's health. Dr. Jordan's findings include application of the original SERM, the estrogen-blocking drug tamoxifen, to the treatment and prevention of breast cancer, and discovery that raloxifene prevents both osteoporosis and breast cancer. The two widely used drugs are among five SERMs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for a variety of indications and all five are connected to basic research in Dr. Jordan's laboratory. [more...](#)



Ashworth Recognized as 2017 Recipient of Brinker Awards

UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center

This year's Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Basic Science will be presented to Alan Ashworth, PhD, FRS, president of the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and senior vice president for cancer clinical services at UCSF Health. For the last two decades, Dr. Ashworth's research has focused on exploiting genetic deficiencies in cancer to develop new therapeutic approaches to the disease. Dennis Slamon, MD, PhD, Director of Clinical and Translational Research and Director of Revlon/UCLA Women's Cancer Research Program at Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, will also receive the Brinker Award. [more...](#)



Barrett Appointed to National Health Disparities Role

Duke Cancer Institute

Nadine J. Barrett, PhD, inaugural director of Duke Cancer Institute's Office of Health Equity and Disparities, has been appointed as a member of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute Advisory Panel on Addressing Health Disparities. [more...](#)

Siegel Receives Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award

GW Cancer Center

Robert Siegel, MD, associate center director for education and training at the George Washington University Cancer Center, medical director for the Katzen Cancer Research Center, and professor of medicine at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences has received the 2017 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award. [more...](#)



Pasco, Lab Receive International Recognition

University of Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Institute

For two decades, David Pasco, PhD, has pursued the discovery of plants that can enhance a person's immune system. Dr. Pasco, a pharmacognosist, is a longtime researcher and associate director of the University of Mississippi's National Center for Natural Products Research and director of the Drug Discovery Core at the University of Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Institute. Recently, a paper published by Dr. Pasco was named the Most

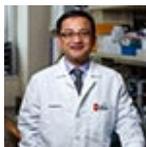
Innovative Paper published in 2016 in *Planta Medica*, the journal of the Society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research. The award was presented in Basel, Switzerland. [more...](#)



Wiest Appointed to NCI Board

Fox Chase Cancer Center, Temple Health

David Wiest, PhD, deputy chief scientific officer and co-leader of blood cell development and function at Fox Chase Cancer Center, has been appointed to the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Board of Scientific Counselors for Basic Sciences. Composed of members knowledgeable across a wide variety of fields, the Board of Scientific Counselors helps NCI continue its tradition of supporting quality scientific research. [more...](#)



Lu Named Vera Bradley Foundation Professor of Breast Cancer Innovation

Indiana University Melvin & Bren Simon Cancer Center

A nationally recognized cancer biologist has been named the Vera Bradley Foundation Professor of Breast Cancer Innovation at Indiana University School of Medicine. Xiongbin Lu, PhD, is also professor of medical and molecular genetics at IU School of Medicine and a member of the Experimental and Developmental Therapeutics research program at the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center. [more...](#)

Grants & Gifts



Brown and Team Receive \$12.8 Million Grant to Fund Brain Cancer Trial

City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center

A research team led by Christine Brown, PhD, and a clinical team headed by Behnam Badie, MD, has received a \$12.8 million grant from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine to fund a phase 1 chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T cell trial targeting malignant glioma. The trial will be open to adults and children. [more...](#)

\$7 Million Awarded for Minority Health Disparities Research

UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

The Arkansas Center for Health Disparities at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has been awarded a \$7 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for research on minority health disparities, including reducing tobacco smoke exposure among children in the Delta and studying HIV prevention among incarcerated African-Americans. The grant was awarded by the NIH's National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. [more...](#)

Researchers to Combat Drug-Resistant Lung Cancer at New NCI-Funded Center

UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has announced that UC San Francisco will host one of five new Cancer Drug Resistance and Sensitivity Centers being set up around the U.S. through funding from the 21st Century Cures Act of 2016. The center, a collaboration with researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine, will receive more than \$1 million per year for five years, with the aims of addressing the persistent challenge of drug resistance in lung cancer by better understanding its underlying biological mechanisms, and also developing new treatments that may overcome resistance. [more...](#)

Globus Expands Data Services to Accelerate Secure Cancer Research

The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center

With a \$4.7 million grant from the National Cancer Institute, the University of Chicago's Globus and leading cancer researchers at University of Chicago Medicine will build new protected cancer research networks that enable collaborations while keeping sensitive health data secure and private. [more...](#)

\$3.3 Million Grant Funds Early Detection of Pancreatic Cancer

UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center

UC Davis researchers, led by Julie Sutcliffe, PhD, have received a \$3.3 million



grant from the National Cancer Institute to advance efforts to diagnose pancreatic cancer before it spreads. As part of the Pancreatic Cancer Detection Consortium (PCDC), the grant will fund efforts to perfect a peptide/radioactive fluorine combo molecule (18F- $\alpha\beta 6$ -BP) that selectively binds to a cell surface receptor called $\alpha\beta 6$. Once injected into patients, positron emission tomography (PET) will be used to track the molecule as it hones in on tumors. [more...](#)

Researchers Seek Ways to Relieve Post-Chemotherapy Cognitive Impairment

UK Markey Cancer Center

Of the 14 million cancer survivors in the United States, a significant number experience a serious side effect called chemotherapy-induced cognitive impairment. Three University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center researchers are tackling this problem head-on, serving as principal investigators on a new \$2.3 million grant awarded by the National Institutes of Health. [more...](#)



Grant Received to Advance Childhood Cancer Research

The University of Kansas Cancer Center

Braden's Hope has announced that it will be awarding \$3 million to advance childhood cancer research at The University of Kansas Cancer Center and Children's Mercy. Braden's Hope is a Kansas City-based charity that raises awareness and funds for precision-based research to cure childhood cancers. The research will be led by Tomoo Iwakuma, MD, PhD. [more...](#)



\$2.4 Million Grant Aids Exploration of Social Media to Reduce Indoor Tanning Behavior

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

A five-year, \$2.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute awarded to Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey behavioral scientist Jerod L. Stapleton, PhD, will support the development and testing of a novel behavioral intervention delivered through the social media site Facebook to reduce high-risk indoor tanning behaviors among young women. [more...](#)



\$1.8 Million Research Project Grant Marks Third Concurrent NIH Award for Scientist

UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

A scientist at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has reached a status few achieve by being awarded his third concurrent R01-type Research Project Grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Daohong Zhou, MD, received the \$1.8 million grant to support his research on a therapy to prevent and possibly reverse a lung disease found in patients who undergo radiation therapy for cancer. Dr. Zhou is associate director for basic research in the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. [more...](#)



Blackburn Earns NIH New Innovator Award for Cancer Research

UK Markey Cancer Center

University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center Researcher Jessica Blackburn, PhD, has earned a National Institutes of Health's New Innovator Award, a grant totaling \$1.5 million over five years to fund pediatric cancer research. Dr. Blackburn runs a basic science laboratory using zebrafish as an animal model. This new award will specifically fund research to find causes of leukemia relapse. [more...](#)

Scientists Receive NIH Director's High-Risk Research Awards

The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center

Three University of Chicago researchers received awards from the National Institutes of Health's High-Risk, High-Reward Research program. Part of the NIH Common Fund, the program funded 86 awards to exceptionally creative scientists proposing to use highly innovative approaches to tackle major challenges in biomedical research. It supports high-

risk ideas with high-impact potential, such as building imaging platforms to monitor genetic processes at a molecular level, identifying immune system proteins that can detect tumors, and creating new chemicals to target genetic factors that lead to disease. [more...](#)

Leadership Transitions



New VP of Cancer Nursing Appointed

Winship Cancer Institute

Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University has announced that Joanne X. McAuliffe, DNP, RN, OCN, NEA-BC, is its new vice president of cancer nursing. McAuliffe joins Emory from Christiana Care Health System in Delaware where she served as vice president Patient Care Services. [more...](#)



Somlo Named Director of Pharmaceutical Initiatives

City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center

George Somlo, MD, a breast cancer and hematology researcher at City of Hope, has been named director of pharmaceutical initiatives at the institution. Currently, Dr. Somlo is a professor with joint appointments in the departments of Medical Oncology & Therapeutics Research and Hematology & Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation and holds key institutional functions as president of the medical staff and a member of the board of directors for City of Hope. In this new, additional role, he will cultivate relationships with pharmaceutical and biotechnology innovators and identify promising partnership opportunities for collaboration with City of Hope investigators, from relevant basic research projects to late-stage development programs. [more...](#)

Research Highlights



Genetic Targets for Chemo-Resistant Breast Cancer Identified

Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center

Research led by Carlos Arteaga, MD, director of the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, has identified potential targets for treatment of triple negative breast cancer, the most aggressive form of breast cancer. Increased activity of two genes, MCL1 and MYC, is associated with the development of chemotherapy resistance. The increased action of these two genes boosts mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation, which promotes the growth of chemotherapy-resistant cancer stem cells, the research showed. [more...](#)



Study: Childhood Cancer Survivors Commonly Stay at Jobs to Keep Health Insurance

Huntsman Cancer Institute

The results of a national cancer survey find a significant number of childhood cancer survivors are worried about keeping their health insurance, to the point of letting it affect their career decisions. Anne Kirchhoff, PhD, led the study. Her goal was to examine the prevalence of job lock in full-time, employed childhood cancer survivors. Job lock is when an employee stays at a job in order to keep work-related health insurance. The study found 23 percent of childhood cancer survivors reported job lock, compared to just under 17 percent of the survivors' siblings who never had cancer. [more...](#)



Chemo-Loaded Nanoparticles Target Breast Cancer That has Spread to Bone

Siteman Cancer Center

Scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have developed a nanoparticle that can deliver chemotherapy directly to tumor cells that have spread to bone. In mice implanted with human breast cancer and exposed to circulating cancer cells likely to take up residence in bone, the researchers showed the treatment kills tumor cells and reduces bone destruction while sparing healthy cells from side effects. Katherine N. Weilbaeher, MD, is senior author on the study. [more...](#)



Good-guy Bacteria May Help Cancer Immunotherapies Do Their Job

Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center

Individuals with certain types of bacteria in their gut may be more likely to respond well to cancer immunotherapy, researchers at the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center found in a study of patients with metastatic melanoma. UT Southwestern cancer researchers analyzed the gut bacteria of 39 melanoma patients who were treated with immunotherapies and found a strong association between a good response and the presence of particular bacteria. Andrew Koh, MD, is senior author on the study. [more...](#)

Details of How Cells 'Release the Brakes' On Division Revealed

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

While the top layers of skin cells will replace themselves a thousand times over the course of a person's lifetime, other cells in the body do not divide at all. To help prevent abnormal cell growth, there are strong brakes in-place to prevent division. In a new study, University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers have discovered details of how cells release their brakes to allow replication and division to proceed. The researchers said their findings may open the door for research into a possible therapeutic strategy for halting cancerous growth. [more...](#)

DNA-based Zika Vaccine Candidate is Safe and Effective at Inducing Immune Response

The Wistar Institute

A new generation DNA-based Zika vaccine demonstrated both safety and ability to elicit an immune response against Zika in humans in a phase 1 clinical trial conducted through a partnership among the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, Inovio Pharmaceuticals, GeneOne Life Science, and The Wistar Institute. [more...](#)



ACA Medicaid Expansion Cut Disparities in Cancer Care for Minorities, Poor

Duke Cancer Institute

States that fully expanded their Medicaid programs under the Affordable Care Act cut their rates of uninsured cancer patients by more than half between 2011 and 2014. Black patients and those living in the highest poverty areas saw the greatest benefit from Medicaid expansion, according to a Duke Cancer Institute analysis. Fumiko Chino, MD, is lead study author. [more...](#)



Lab Discovers Novel Mechanism that Drives Prostate Cancer

Case Comprehensive Cancer Center

Research from the laboratory of Hannelore Heemers, PhD, have uncovered a previously unknown driver of prostate cancer which may be a viable target for treatment. Currently, standard treatment for prostate cancer involves blocking androgens from binding to their receptor altogether. While this is successful in early stages, prostate cancer cells eventually become resistant and continue to metastasize. Rather than focus on preventing the androgen receptor from becoming activated, Dr. Heemers' team set out to determine where the receptor activity might be blocked after activation. [more...](#)

New Gene-Altering Treatment Offered for Blood Cancers

Siteman Cancer Center

Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis is one of the first centers nationwide to offer a new immunotherapy that targets certain blood cancers. Newly approved by the Food and Drug Administration for types of advanced non-Hodgkin lymphoma in adults, the CAR-T cell therapy harnesses a patient's own immune system to fight cancer. [more...](#)

Researchers Find Novel Mechanism of Resistance to Anti-Cancer Drugs

Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center

The targeted anti-cancer therapies cetuximab and panitumumab are mainstays of treatment for advanced colorectal cancer. However, many patients have tumors with genetic mutations that make them resistant to these anti-epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) monoclonal antibodies, or the cancers develop resistance during treatment. Researchers seeking to understand mechanisms of intrinsic and acquired resistance have focused on gene

mutations, such as activating mutations in the oncogene KRAS. Now, Vanderbilt investigators have discovered a novel non-genetic cause of resistance to cetuximab. [more...](#)

Drug Reactions Result in Poorer Outcomes for African American Breast Cancer Patients

Indiana University Melvin & Bren Simon Cancer Center

African American women participating in a clinical study on breast cancer had more side effects and poorer survival rates than did women of European ancestry, according to a recently published Indiana University study that identified ethnicity through genetics, a first in this type of research. Instead of relying on self-reporting of race, the researchers utilized genetic information from a National Cancer Institute-sponsored study that compared the therapy-induced toxicity of three standard adjuvant drugs. [more...](#)

By Decoding How HPV Causes Cancer, Researchers Find a Potential Treatment Strategy

Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center

A study that teases apart the biological mechanisms by which human papillomaviruses (HPV) cause cancer has found what researchers at Georgetown University Medical Center say is a new strategy that might provide targeted treatment for these cancers. The study found that E6, an oncoprotein produced by the virus, interacts with several other molecules in host cells in a manner that ensures infected cells cannot die. [more...](#)

Experimental "Nano-Chemo" Particle to Treat Bladder Cancer Developed

Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center

Working with mice and rats, Johns Hopkins researchers have developed a way to successfully deliver nano-sized, platinum-based chemotherapy drugs to treat a form of bladder cancer called nonmuscle-invasive that is found in the lining of the organ and has not invaded deeper into bladder tissue. The tiny drug-infused particles, they say, potentially offer a less toxic clinical alternative to standard chemotherapy delivered intravenously or through a catheter inserted into the bladder. [more...](#)



Timely Treatment of Lesions That May Cause Anal Cancer Can Cut Risk, Mortality

University of Florida Health Cancer Center

No guidelines exist for the treatment of precancerous anal lesions that might ultimately develop into anal cancer, leaving physicians to make a best guess about whether to remove them or wait and watch to see if they go away on their own. A study led by a University of Florida researcher offers recommendations for treating the lesions in a high-risk group that could lower patients' risk of developing anal cancer by 80 percent. The study's lead investigator is Ashish A. Deshmukh, PhD, MPH. [more...](#)

Researchers Engineer Complex TCR Immunotherapy That May Target Relapsing Leukemia

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Researchers at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington have developed a novel way to genetically engineer T cells that may be effective for treating and preventing leukemia relapse. The findings provide the basis for launching a first-in-human clinical trial of this new immunotherapy, which relies on engineered T-cell receptors, or TCRs. This immunotherapy represents a different method of genetic engineering than the CAR T-cell therapies that were recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. [more...](#)

To Improve Melanoma Treatment, Researchers Look to Block Deletion of 'Self-Reactive' Immune Cells

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

Researchers at the University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center are using what they know about a rare, inherited autoimmune disease to turn the body's defenses against melanoma. The researchers report on a potential new way to fight melanoma by blocking one of the immune system's checks and balances. Combining their strategy with an existing immunotherapy treatment that works by releasing the "brakes" on immune cells, they found they could shrink melanoma tumors, and prolong survival in preclinical models for melanoma. [more...](#)



UNM Plays Key Role in First-in- Human Testing of New Cancer Drug

University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center

The UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center played a key role in the first clinical trials of BXQ-350. Comprised of a human protein, SapC, and a human lipid, DOPS, BXQ-350 has been shown in pre-clinical studies to selectively target solid tumor cancer cells. Olivier Rixe, MD, PhD, originated the Phase 1 protocol, oversaw the protocol development for all Phase 1A sites, and directed the Phase 1A clinical trial at UNM Cancer Center. He was also involved in developing the drug through preclinical trials to its Investigational New Drug application. [more...](#)



Smokers Could Gain 86 Million Years of Life If They Switch to Vaping, Study Finds

Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center

Up to 6.6 million cigarette smokers will live substantially longer if cigarette smoking is replaced by vaping over a ten-year period, calculates a research team led by investigators from Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. In all, cigarette smokers who switch to e-cigarettes could live 86.7 million more years with policies that encourage cigarette smokers to switch completely to e-cigarettes. David Levy, PhD, is the study's lead author. [more...](#)



Oncogene FOXQ1 Promotes Some Tumor Types but Suppresses Another

Roswell Park Cancer Institute

A treatment that works well for one cancer type can possibly make other cancers grow more quickly. That is the striking implication of new research from a team at Roswell Park Cancer Institute led by Mikhail Nikiforov, PhD. The transcription factor FOXQ1 is a known oncogene that has been previously associated with carcinomas, including many types of breast, colorectal, liver and ovarian cancers. Looking to better understand how this protein might be involved in additional cancer types, the researchers investigated FOXQ1's role in melanoma, a distinct cancer type that originates from different types of cells than carcinomas. [more...](#)

A Piece of Genome Might Predict Cancer Risk

Fox Chase Cancer Center, Temple Health

Researchers at Fox Chase Cancer Center and University of California San Diego School of Medicine have published a paper that outlines characteristics on the cell's surface that could predict the mutated oncogenes that will be present in a patient's cancer. In the study, Joan Font-Burgada, PhD, Hannah Carter, PhD, and colleagues closely examined molecules in the Major Histocompatibility Complex class I. [more...](#)



MRI Contrast Agent Locates, Distinguishes Aggressive From Slow-Growing Breast Cancer

Case Comprehensive Cancer Center

A new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) contrast agent being tested by researchers at Case Western Reserve University not only pinpoints breast cancers at early stages but differentiates between aggressive and slow-growing types. Zheng-Rong Lu, PhD, led the research. [more...](#)



Before Sarcoma Surgery, Radiation

UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center

UC Davis researchers have shown that radiation therapy before surgery improves overall survival for patients with soft tissue sarcomas. This pre-surgical, or neoadjuvant, radiotherapy allows surgeons to get better margins around tumors and remove even microscopic cancer tissue more often. Alicia Gingrich, MD, is the first author and a third-year general surgery resident. [more...](#)

DNA-Level Biomarker Can Predict Overall Survival for Rare Brain Tumors

The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

James Cancer Hospital & Solove Research Institute

MGMT promoter methylation status - information gathered at a DNA-level - can help predict overall survival for patients with a rare form of brain cancer known as anaplastic astrocytoma, according to a new analysis from The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC - James). The goal of this study was to determine the number of patients with positive MGMT promoter methylation status and its significance as a means of predicting survival outcomes for patients with anaplastic astrocytomas. [more...](#)

Eleven Million U.S. Men are Infected with Oral HPV

University of Florida Health Cancer Center

Approximately 11 million men and three million women in the U.S. are infected with oral human papillomavirus, or HPV, according to a new study led by University of Florida researchers. Men were also almost six times more likely to be infected with cancer-causing oral HPV strains. To gain a better understanding of oral HPV infection and its concordance with genital HPV infection, the team analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2011-2014, a nationally representative survey conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics that combines survey questions with laboratory testing. [more...](#)

Scientists Track Ovarian Cancers to Site of Origin: Fallopian Tubes

Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center

Some scientists have suspected that the most common form of ovarian cancer may originate in the fallopian tubes, the thin fibrous tunnels that connect the ovaries to the uterus. Now, results of a study of nine women suggest that the genomic roots of many ovarian tumors may indeed arise in the fallopian tubes, potentially providing insights into the origin of ovarian cancer and suggesting new ways for prevention and intervention of this disease. [more...](#)

Tarloxitinib Puts Tumor-Seeking Tail on Anti-EGFR Drug to Precisely Target Lung Cancer

University of Colorado Cancer Center

A University of Colorado Cancer Center study presented at the AACR-NCI-EORTC International Conference on Molecular Targets 2017 proposes a unique way to reach the concentration of anti-EGFR drug needed to fight exon 20 insertions without harming healthy tissues: By pairing an anti-EGFR drug with a "tail" that only activates the drug when it is very near tumor cells, tarloxitinib brings the drug to tumors while keeping concentrations safe in surrounding tissues. [more...](#)

Melanoma Cells Rewire Their Signaling Pathways to Resist Drug Treatment

The Wistar Institute

Almost all patients with metastatic melanoma treated with combination therapies eventually relapse. New research led by The Wistar Institute and the University of Pennsylvania characterized the compensatory alterations that occur in melanoma signaling pathways allowing melanoma cells to escape therapy. [more...](#)

Other News



NIH Partners with 11 Biopharmaceutical Companies to Accelerate Development of Cancer Immunotherapy Strategies

National Institutes of Health

The National Institutes of Health and 11 leading biopharmaceutical companies have launched the Partnership for Accelerating Cancer Therapies (PACT), a five-year public-private research collaboration totaling \$215 million as part of the Cancer Moonshot. PACT will initially focus on efforts to identify, develop and validate robust biomarkers - standardized biological markers of disease and treatment response - to advance new immunotherapy treatments that harness the immune system to attack cancer. The partnership will be managed by the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, with the Food and Drug Administration serving in an advisory role. [more...](#)

Program Focuses on Cancer Disparities In LGBTQ Community

Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute

Hayley S. Thompson, PhD, leader of the Population Studies and Disparities



Research Program at the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, has spent her career addressing health disparities and collaborating with community groups and others to find solutions to improve the health outcomes for those most vulnerable. Dr. Thompson launched the Detroit HealthLink for Equity in Cancer Care at Karmanos in 2016 and most recently expanded the program to engage LGBTQ communities in Detroit to help close the gaps on cancer disparities. [more...](#)

MD Anderson, Pfizer Oncology Collaboration to Evaluate Immuno-Oncology Combinations

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Pfizer Inc. have entered into a clinical collaboration to study novel combinations of three Pfizer investigational immuno-oncology therapies and other Pfizer agents in the treatment of various solid tumors and hematologic malignancies. [more...](#)

FDA Clears IND Application for Ciclopirox Prodrug in Bladder Cancer Treatment

The University of Kansas Cancer Center

CicloMed LLC has announced that its development candidate for non-muscle-invasive and muscle-invasive bladder cancer, Ciclopirox Prodrug, was cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to begin human clinical trials. With this clearance, CicloMed plans to initiate the first-in-human safety trial in patients with advanced solid tumor cancers as soon as possible at several centers, including The University of Kansas Cancer Center. [more...](#)

Teen First in Virginia to Receive Gene Therapy in UVA Clinical Trial

University of Virginia Cancer Center

The University of Virginia School of Medicine has administered its first dose of an experimental immunotherapy for pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia that has resisted other forms of treatment. The approach, known as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy, takes a person's own immune cells and genetically modifies them with the goal of making them more effective cancer killers. [more...](#)

UAB First in U.S. to Use HyperArc High-Definition Radiotherapy on Brain Cancer

UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has treated brain cancer patients for the first time utilizing Varian HyperArc[®] High-Definition Radiotherapy, making the academic medical center the first in the United States to use this technology for complex radiosurgical procedures. With HyperArc, which Varian Medical Systems tested and partly developed in collaboration with UAB, clinicians can deliver more compact radiation doses that closely conform to the size, shape and location of brain cancer tumors while sparing more surrounding healthy tissue. [more...](#)

Job Opportunities

Clinical Research Coordinator

University of Illinois Cancer Center [more...](#)

Assistant Director, UACC - Phoenix Administration & Clinical Trials Operations

University of Arizona Cancer Center [more...](#)

Clinical Research Coordinator, Senior

University of Virginia Cancer Center [more...](#)

Manager Clinical Trial Office

University of Vermont Cancer Center [more...](#)

PRMS and Regulatory Affairs Director

Moffitt Cancer Center [more...](#)

Clinical Research Operations Manager
University of Virginia Cancer Center [more...](#)

Regulatory Operations Manager, Oncology Clinical Trials
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center [more...](#)

Regulatory Manager
University of Illinois Cancer Center [more...](#)

Meeting Announcements

SITC 2017

November 8-12, 2017

Gaylord National Hotel & Conference Center
201 Waterfront Street, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

The Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) Annual Meeting & Pre-Conference Programs (SITC 2017) is the largest annual conference solely dedicated to cancer immunotherapy and brings together stakeholders across the field to advance the science, discover breakthroughs and educate the world on cancer immunotherapy. Known as the premier destination for scientific exchange, education and networking in the cancer immunotherapy field, SITC 2017 is the conference you don't want to miss!

www.sitcancer.org/2017

Inaugural National Latino Cancer Conference in San Antonio

Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos

February 21-23, 2018

Marriott Plaza San Antonio

[Register today and submit an abstract](#) for the inaugural Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos conference on Feb. 21-23, 2018, in historic and culturally dynamic San Antonio, led by Dr. Amelie Ramirez, a cancer researcher at UT Health San Antonio.

2018 Pan Pacific Lymphoma Conference

July 16-20, 2018

Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa, Maui, Hawaii

Join us for a 5-day comprehensive educational conference with expert faculty from around the globe presenting the most up-to-date clinical advances in lymphoma and transplantation. Registration deadline is June 22.

unmc.edu/panpacificlymphoma