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## News From the Association of American Cancer Institutes | December 2025

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[Awards & Honors](#) | [Grants & Gifts](#) | [Leadership Transitions](#) | [Research Highlights](#) | [Other News](#)  
[Job Opportunities](#) | [Meeting Announcements](#)

## AACI HEADLINES

### [In Memoriam: Dr. Edward Chu](#)



Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC) Director **Edward "Ed" Chu, MD, MMS**, died on November 13 of glioblastoma. A dedicated member of the AACI Board of Directors, Dr. Chu was committed to providing compassionate care to patients and advancing research to improve treatments for colorectal and GI cancers. He served as a trusted advisor and mentor for numerous students, fellows, faculty colleagues, and leaders of NCI-Designated Cancer Centers. MECCC has established the [Edward Chu Fund for Cancer Research](#) in his memory. [Read More](#)

### [Support the 2026 AACI CADEx Conference](#)



AACI encourages its member cancer centers and corporate partners to participate in the 2026 [Catchment Area Data Excellence \(CADEx\) Conference](#) as a supporter. Conference packages and "à la carte" opportunities are available, at a range of [support levels](#). The CADEx conference will be held **March 9-11** in Atlanta, GA. [Read More](#) | [Register Today](#) | [View Support Opportunities](#)

### [PCLI Webinar: Engaging Patient Advocates in Research and Clinical Trials](#)

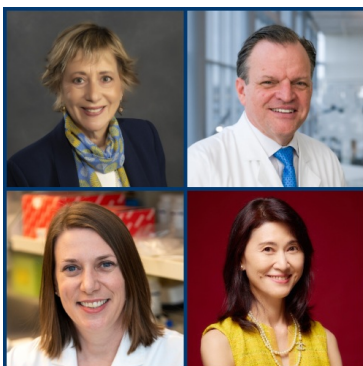
*Pictured, clockwise from top left: Dr. Lee Wilke, Mary Pat Berry, Dr. Jane Perlmutter, and Patty Spears*

AACI's [Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative \(PCLI\)](#) will host a



webinar titled **"Partners in Progress: Engaging Patient Advocates in Research and Clinical Trials"** at 12:00 pm eastern time on **Thursday, December 18**. This webinar marks the launch of a new collaboration between AACI and **Medlive**, a trusted leader in expert-led digital medical education. [Read More](#) | [Register Today](#)

## [AACI Announces New PCLI Steering Committee Members](#)



*Pictured, clockwise from top left: Drs. Paula Fracasso, Jason Fleming, Naoko Takebe, and Jennifer Woyach*

The AACI **Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative (PCLI)** Steering Committee is delighted to share that **Paula Fracasso, MD, PhD, FACP**, has been selected to serve as chair beginning January 1, 2026. We are also pleased to welcome three newly elected steering committee members: **Jason Fleming, MD**; **Naoko Takebe, MD, PhD**; and **Jennifer Woyach, MD**. [Read More](#)

## [AACI Cellular Therapy Initiative Welcomes New Steering Committee Members](#)



*Pictured, top right: Dr. Natalie Grover; bottom, left to right: Dr. Siddhartha Ganguly, Tania Jain, Dr. Marcos de Lima, and Dr. Richard Maziarz*

The AACI **Cellular Therapy Initiative (CTI)** Steering Committee is pleased to announce that **Natalie Grover, MD**, has been appointed as its next chair, and that four newly elected members will join the steering committee on January 1, 2026: **Siddhartha Ganguly, MD, FACP**; **Tania Jain, MBBS**; **Marcos de Lima, MD**; and **Richard Maziarz, MD**. [Read More](#)

## [Save the Date: 2026 AACI/AACR Hill Day](#)



Please save the date for AACI's joint annual Hill Day, hosted with the **American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)**. The **2026 AACI/AACR Hill Day** will take place in Washington, DC, on **Thursday, May 14**. Participation in Hill Day is crucial to sharing our message with our legislators in Washington: that stable, predictable funds for the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute are critical for advancing cancer research and care at our nation's cancer centers. [Read More](#)

## [Take Action: Protect ACA Subsidies](#)

Enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium subsidies are set to expire at the end of 2025. Without congressional action, millions of Americans could face steep increases in health insurance premiums or lose coverage altogether. AACI urges you to **write to your legislators** using our customizable letter template to encourage them to protect access to health care. [Read More](#) | [Contact Your Legislators](#)

## AWARDS &amp; HONORS

## [Birrer Inducted Into American Academy of Sciences and Letters](#)

[UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute](#)



**Michael J. Birrer, MD, PhD**, director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Medical Sciences (UAMS), has been inducted as a member of the American Academy of Sciences and Letters. Dr. Birrer was among more than 60 distinguished scholars inducted during a November 12 ceremony at the historic Decatur House in Washington, DC. [Read More](#)

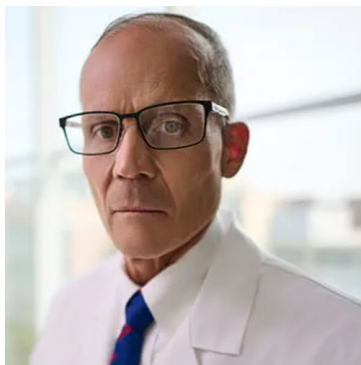
## [Lung Cancer Team Earns International Recognition](#)

[Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

The lung cancer team at Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC) has been recognized by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer for delivering outstanding care. The Cancer Care Team Award selects a single institution in international geographic regions, with patients, family members, and caregivers nominating the teams. MECCC is the only center in North America honored with the award this year. [Read More](#)

## [McGuirk Receives Lifetime Achievement Award](#)

[The University of Kansas Cancer Center](#)



**Joseph McGuirk, DO**, division director of hematologic malignancies and cellular therapeutics at The University of Kansas Cancer Center, was awarded Kansas City University's Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award. A nationally recognized leader in hematologic malignancies and cellular therapeutics, Dr. McGuirk chaired AACI's CAR T Initiative, now known as the Cellular Therapy Initiative. [Read More](#)

## [Breast Center Earns National Accreditation From the American College of Surgeons](#)

[Tampa General Hospital Cancer Institute](#)

The Breast Center at the Tampa General Hospital Cancer Institute has achieved accreditation by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers administered by the American College of Surgeons. This recognition reflects the academic health system's commitment to providing the highest standards of breast care through a comprehensive, patient-centered approach. [Read More](#)

## [Dasgupta Named Distinguished Professor for Pediatric Cancer](#)

[Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University](#)

**Biplab Dasgupta, PhD, MBA**, has been named the inaugural Killian Owen Distinguished Professor for Pediatric Cancer. One of Emory's highest honors, distinguished professorships recognize exceptional faculty achievement and provide an enduring investment in the institution's academic and research community. [Read More](#)



## [Two UPMC Members Elected to the National Academy of Medicine](#)

[UPMC Hillman Cancer Center](#)



UPMC Hillman Cancer Center incoming director, **John Byrd, MD**, and faculty member, **Terence Dermody, MD**, were elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). They join 19 other University of Pittsburgh faculty members who have been elected to the academy and are two of three University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine NAM members elected in 2025. [Read More](#)

## [National Accreditation Earned for Rectal Cancer Care](#)

[Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center announces the recent accreditation of its rectal cancer program by the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer. This distinction signifies that Roswell Park meets the highest national standards in the surgical care of people with rectal cancer and is recognized as an American College of Surgeons Surgical Quality Partner. [Read More](#)

## [Over Three Dozen UCLA Faculty Ranked Among Most Influential Researchers Worldwide](#)

[UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

Thirty-nine UCLA faculty members, including cancer researchers, have been named among the world's most influential scholars in the sciences and social sciences – a distinction reserved for only 1 out of every 1,000 researchers. The annual Highly Cited Researchers list, compiled by international data and analytics firm Clarivate, identifies scholars whose work has been cited most often in papers published by other researchers in their fields over the past 11 years. [Read More](#)

### GRANTS & GIFTS

## [NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center Designation Achieved](#)

[The Tisch Cancer Institute at Mount Sinai](#)

## [More Than \\$15 Million Awarded by CPRIT](#)

[Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine](#)

## [Winship Co-Leads New Grant to Address Ancestry-Related Differences in Lymphoma Outcomes](#)

[Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University](#)

## [\\$9.86 Million for Retrovirus-Focused Research](#)

[Siteman Cancer Center](#)



## Castro Receives \$4.5 Million NIH Grant to Further Brain Tumor Research

University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center

## Researcher Leads \$2.2 Million Project Addressing Youth Health in Arkansas

UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

## \$1.5 Million NCI Grant to Train Next Generation of Cancer Innovators

UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

## Researchers Awarded Federal Grant to Explore Topical Immunoprevention for Skin Cancer

The University of Arizona Cancer Center

## Tissue Bank Expands Support for Breast Cancer Research Team

Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center

## Grant to Expand Access to Breast Cancer Prevention Trials

The University of Kansas Cancer Center

### LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

## George Named Interim Director

UF Health Cancer Institute



**Thomas George, MD, FACP, FASCO**, an accomplished gastrointestinal medical oncologist and nationally known expert in clinical research, has been named interim director of UF Health Cancer Institute, effective Nov. 17. He succeeds **Jonathan Licht, MD**, the institute's director for the past decade, who is leaving UF for another position. Dr. George recently served as chair of AACI's Clinical Research Innovation Steering Committee. [Read More](#)

## Schulick Transitioning From Cancer Center Director

University of Colorado Cancer Center



**Richard Schulick, MD, MBA, FACS**, director of the University of Colorado Cancer Center, announced in October that he will join the University of Rochester Medical Center in April as inaugural chief clinical officer, senior vice president for health system strategy, and vice dean for clinical affairs. Dr. Schulick joined the University of Colorado in 2012 as chair of the Department of Surgery and was named cancer center director in 2018. [Read More](#)

## Sulman Named Interim Executive Director

Duke Cancer Institute



**Erik Sulman, MD, PhD**, will serve as the interim executive director of the Duke Cancer Institute (DCI), effective Jan. 5, 2026. Dr. Sulman succeeds **Michael B. Kastan, MD, PhD**, who served for more than a decade as DCI's inaugural executive director. [Read More](#)

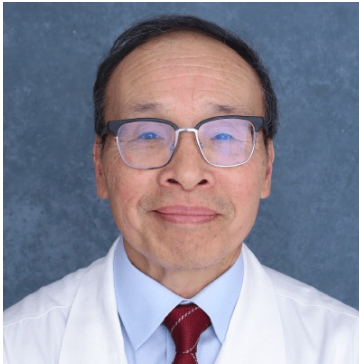
## Three New Senior Leadership Roles Added

### University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center

The University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center has named two new deputy directors and a new associate director to provide strategic leadership in cancer care, research, and training. They are: **Michael Deininger, MD, PhD**, deputy director for team and transdisciplinary research; **Lesly Dossett, MD, MPH**, deputy director for clinical innovation and engagement; and **Samuel Kaffenberger, MD**, associate director for clinical operations. [Read More](#)

## Hu Joins Sarcoma Program as Associate Director

### Cedars-Sinai Cancer



The Sarcoma Program at Cedars-Sinai Cancer has added to its growing roster of specialists with the recruitment of associate director **James Hu, MD**. As associate director of the Sarcoma Program, Dr. Hu provides care for patients at Cedars-Sinai and its affiliate, Huntington Health Cancer Center, and leads research and teaching initiatives. [Read More](#)

## Schmitz, Zevallos Announced as Deputy Directors

### UPMC Hillman Cancer Center



**Kathryn Schmitz, PhD, MPH**, and **José P. Zevallos, MD, MPH**, have been named deputy directors of UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, effective November 1, 2025. Drs. Schmitz and Zevallos served as interim director and deputy director, respectively, since January of this year. [Read More](#)

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

## Researchers Uncover Key Immune Differences in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

### LSU LCMC Health Cancer Center

## Novel Liver Cancer Vaccine Achieves Response in Rare Disease Affecting Children and Young Adults

### Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University

## [Study Identifies Key Genes Linked to Aggressive Prostate Cancer in Men of African Descent](#)

[USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [DNA Copy-Number Changes Help Melanoma Develop Resistance to Immunotherapy, Study Finds](#)

[UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Extensive LA-Area Blazes Altered Blood Proteins in Firefighters, Raising Health Concerns](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

## [Secret to a Long Life? In Bowhead Whales, a Protein Repairs Damaged DNA](#)

[Wilmot Cancer Institute, UR Medicine](#)

## [Surgery After Immunotherapy Boosts Survival for Liver Cancer Patients](#)

[Cedars-Sinai Cancer](#)

## [Targeted Drug Could Benefit Pediatric and Young Adult Patients With Invasive Soft Tissue Cancer](#)

[VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Researchers Find Ancestry Impacts Effectiveness of Prostate Cancer Drugs](#)

[Fox Chase Cancer Center, Temple Health](#)

## [Advancing Radiotheranostics Through Prostate, Neuroendocrine Cancer Research](#)

[Duke Cancer Institute](#)

## [Precision Aging Network Data Release Will Open New Pathways for Healthy Aging Research](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

## [Study Suggests Type 1 Diabetes May Significantly Raise Bladder Cancer Risk](#)

[USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Shedding Light on DICER1 Cancer Predisposition in Rhabdomyosarcoma](#)

[Comprehensive Cancer Center St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#)

## [Some p53 Mutations Could Help Fight Cancer](#)

[Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine](#)

## [Early Immunotherapy Shows Promising Results in Advanced Basal Cell Carcinoma](#)

[Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer at Johns Hopkins University](#)

## [Foam Seen as Starting Point on Path to Bedside Gene Therapy](#)

[Fred Hutch Cancer Center](#)

## [p53 Drives Lung Cancer Regression Through a TSC2/TFEB-](#)

## [Dependent Senescence Program](#)

[Stanford Cancer Institute](#)

## [Researchers Link Cancer Immunotherapy Failure to Protein Quality-Control Collapse](#)

[The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute](#)

### OTHER NEWS

## [Late-Stage Lung Cancer Diagnoses Plummet to a New Low in the Bronx](#)

[Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC) announces that for the first time in decades, more people in its community are being diagnosed with stage I, versus stage IV, lung cancer. MECCC clinicians are now finding cancers when they are most treatable and curable thanks to enhanced screening, novel care, access to clinical trials, and community education. [\*Read More\*](#)

## [Center to Develop AI-Based Imaging Tools](#)

[Siteman Cancer Center](#)

A new center is bringing together physicians and researchers from across WashU Medicine, including Siteman Cancer Center, to develop AI-based imaging tools to improve the diagnosis and precision treatment of cancer and other conditions. [\*Read More\*](#)

## [Stanford Tool Matches Patients to Clinical Trials](#)

[Stanford Cancer Institute](#)

The Stanford Cancer Institute Clinical Trials Office developed an electronic medical record-integrated tool to help clinicians easily locate cancer clinical trials for patients. Results show it yields faster referrals, more screening requests, and a cultural shift toward making clinical trials a standard part of care. [\*Read More\*](#)

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

## [Post-Doctoral Research Fellow](#)

[Fred Hutch Cancer Center](#)

## [AVP Ambulatory Operations](#)

[Fred Hutch Cancer Center](#)

## [Hematology/Oncology - Solid Tumor Faculty](#)

[Case Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Senior Director, Clinical Trials](#)

[Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University](#)

## [Adolescent and Young Adult \(AYA\) Medical Oncologist](#)

[Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University](#)

## [Director of Cancer Clinical Research Audits and Compliance](#)

[Hollings Cancer Center, Medical University of South Carolina](#)

## [Program Lead/Scientific Writer](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

### MEETINGS & EVENTS



## [Advancing Cancer Research for Latinos and All Populations](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[February 18-20, 2026](#)

[San Antonio, TX](#)

## [2026 AACI Catchment Area Data Excellence \(CADEx\) Conference](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[March 9-11, 2026](#)

[Atlanta, GA](#)

## [2026 AACI/AACR Hill Day](#)

[SAVE THE DATE](#)

[May 14, 2026](#)

[Washington, DC](#)

## [18th Annual AACI Clinical Research Innovation \(CRI\) Meeting](#)

[SAVE THE DATE](#)

[June 23-25, 2026](#)

[Rosemont, IL](#)

## [2026 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting](#)

[SAVE THE DATE](#)

[October 25-27, 2026](#)

[Chicago, IL](#)

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