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News From the Association of American Cancer Institutes | May 2026

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

AACI HEADLINES

[Cancer Center at Illinois Earns NCI Designation](#)



The Cancer Center at Illinois (CCIL) has received designation from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), making it the nation's 74th NCI-Designated Cancer Center and the 8th Basic Cancer Center to earn designation. Rather than treating patients, Basic Cancer Centers focus on the discovery and development of innovative approaches to cancer detection, treatment, and prevention. **Rohit Bhargava, PhD**, is the Phillip and Ann Sharp Director of CCIL. [Read More](#)

[Ovarian Cancer Physician and Researcher to Lead Neal Cancer Center](#)



In April, following a national search, **Daniela Matei, MD**, became the new director of Houston Methodist Dr. Mary and Ron Neal Cancer Center. An expert in ovarian cancer treatment and research, Dr. Matei previously served as chief of the Division of Reproductive Science in Medicine in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and led the Translational Research in Malignancies Program at Northwestern's Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center. [Read More](#)

[Steidl Named Director of Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

Ulrich Steidl, MD, PhD, an international leader in blood cancer and stem cell research, has been named director of the Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC) and vice president of cancer medicine at Montefiore Einstein. He previously served as interim director of MECCC, a role he took on in late 2025 after the passing of Director **Edward Chu, MD, MMS**. [Read More](#)



[Childhood Cancer Expert Named Director of UW Carbone Cancer Center](#)



Christian Capitini, MD, a national expert in the treatment and research of childhood cancers, is the new director of the University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center. He formally assumed the role in April, after serving as acting director since December 2024. Dr. Capitini is also a pediatric hematologist and oncologist with UW Health Kids at the American Family Children's Hospital. His research focuses on stem cell transplant and personalized cellular therapies. [Read More](#)

[Baldwin, Capito to Receive Cancer Research Ally Award](#)



Senators **Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)** and **Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)** will be honored with the Cancer Research Ally Award during an evening reception on **Wednesday, May 13**, before the **2026 AACI/AACR Hill Day** in Washington, DC. Sens. Baldwin and Capito serve as the ranking member and chair, respectively, of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. [Read More](#)

[Register Today: 2026 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting and Pre-Event Meetings](#)



Registration is now open for the **2026 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting**, which will take place **October 25-27** at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, and for two pre-event meetings: the **AACI Leadership Development Workshop** and the **Impact Summit**. The early registration rate is available through **Sunday, May 17**. [Read More](#) | [Register Today](#)

[Abstract Winners Announced for 18th Annual AACI CRI Meeting](#)

The AACI Clinical Research Innovation (CRI) Steering Committee, with the assistance of peer reviewers from the CRI community, has selected four abstracts from 162 submissions for formal presentation at the **18th Annual AACI CRI Meeting**, **June 23-25**, at the Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont, IL. Winning abstract authors represent **UF Health Cancer Institute**; **OHSU Knight Cancer Institute**; **Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center at NYU Langone Health**; and **Moffitt Cancer Center**. [Read More](#) | [Register Today](#)



[PCLI Webinar: Medical-Legal Partnerships in Cancer Care](#)



AACI's **Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative** (PCLI) will host a webinar titled "**Medical-Legal Partnerships: Breaking Barriers in Cancer Care**" at 2:00 pm eastern time on **Tuesday, June 9**. Attendees will explore the role of medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) in cancer care, the history and evolution of the model, and how MLPs can be integrated into cancer centers to better support patients and advance patient-centered care. [Read More](#) | [Register Today](#)

[AACI Names Medlive Exclusive Digital Education Partner](#)



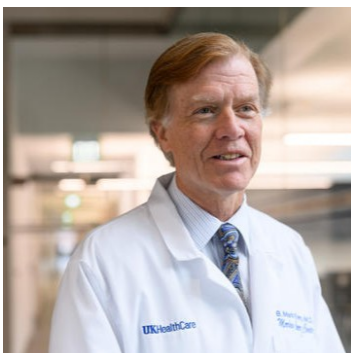
AACI has named **Medlive** its exclusive digital education partner. The partnership is designed to support AACI's mission by ensuring that emerging science reaches the clinicians who need it most. Medlive will provide a scalable, video-first platform to support our education initiatives, with programming informed by clinician engagement and evolving data insights. [Read More](#) | [Explore Our Programs](#)

NEWS FROM THE CENTERS

AWARDS & HONORS

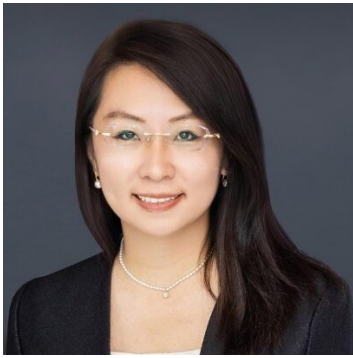
[Evers to Lead American Surgical Association](#)

[UK Markey Cancer Center](#)



B. Mark Evers, MD, director of UK Markey Cancer Center, has been named president-elect of the American Surgical Association (ASA). A surgical oncologist and physician-scientist with more than three decades of research and clinical experience, Dr. Evers will help guide the ASA in its mission to advance surgical science, education and patient care across the nation. Dr. Evers is a member of AACI's Board of Directors. [Read More](#)

[Cao Named Guggenheim Fellow](#)



Yin Cao, ScD, MPH, has been named a 2026 Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, a prestigious honor recognizing her leadership in integrating data science, cancer etiology, and population health. She is a research member of Siteman Cancer Center. [Read More](#)

[Pancreatic Cancer Researcher Presents Byers Award Lecture](#)

[UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)



Rushika Perera, PhD, the Deborah Cowan Professor and vice chair of the Department of Anatomy, and chief scientific officer of UCSF's Pancreas Center, presented the 2026 Byers Award Lecture in Basic Science – one of UCSF's highest honors for early- and mid-career scientists. Dr. Perera's work is creating new possibilities for cutting off the fuel supply for pancreatic cancer. [Read More](#)

[DiPersio Receives AACR Blood Cancer Research Award](#)

[Siteman Cancer Center](#)



John F. DiPersio, MD, PhD, was honored by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) for decades of innovation that have transformed the understanding and treatment of hematologic malignancies. [Read More](#)

[Researcher Wins Big 12 Faculty of the Year Award](#)

[The University of Kansas Cancer Center](#)



John Thyfault, PhD, professor of cell biology and physiology at the University of Kansas Medical Center and a nationally recognized leader in metabolism and exercise physiology, has been named KU's winner of the 2025-2026 Big 12 Faculty of the Year Awards. Dr. Thyfault's interdisciplinary research examines the impact of obesity and metabolism on diseases, including cancer. [Read More](#)

[\\$8.2 Million NIH Grant Awarded to Investigate the Origins of Blood-Forming Stem Cells](#)

[Mount Sinai Tisch Cancer Center](#)

[Researchers Establish New Digital Engagement and Cancer Outcomes Center With ACS Grant](#)

[Karmanos Cancer Institute, Wayne State University](#)

[State Innovation Funds Target Rural Cancer Care](#)

[Tampa General Hospital Cancer Institute](#)

[DOD Award Supports Bladder Cancer Research](#)

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

[Endowment Honors Clinical Science Delivered With Empathy](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

[\\$1 Million Received to Create Endowed Funds at Cancer Center](#)

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

[Chuckstrong Raises More Than \\$900,000 for Cancer Research](#)

[Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

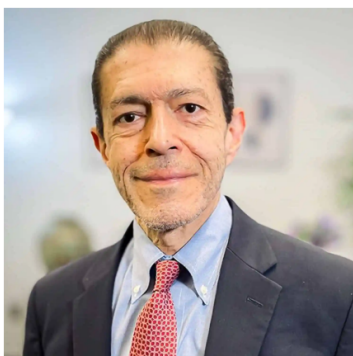
[Grant Will Address Gaps in Sexual Health Counseling for Female Rectal Cancer Patients](#)

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

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

[Cortes Joins Division of Hematology and Oncology](#)

[O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham](#)



Correction: The April 2026 AACI Update email contained incorrect information for this story. We apologize for the error.

UAB Medicine and the O'Neal Cancer Center announce the commitment from **Jorge E. Cortes, MD**, to the Division of Hematology and Oncology, joining as the chief of hematology in April. Dr. Cortes will also assume the role of associate director for translation for the UAB O'Neal Cancer Center. [Read More](#)

[Mendillo Appointed Associate Director for Education](#)

[Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University](#)



Marc Mendillo, PhD, has been appointed associate director for education at Lurie Cancer Center. This position supports the training and development of the next generation of cancer researchers and clinicians, a core expectation of NCI-Designated Cancer Centers. [Read More](#)

[Supportive Oncology Expert to Lead IU Center](#)

[Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)



An internationally recognized supportive oncology expert has joined the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. **Christian "Chris" Nelson, PhD**, a clinical psychologist, has been named the director of the Walther Center for Supportive Oncology at the cancer center. In addition, he'll serve as chief resilience officer at the cancer center. [Read More](#)

[Passaglia Named Associate Director for Administration](#)

[Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University](#)



Lurie Cancer Center has named **Carolyn Passaglia, MSRC**, associate director for administration. In this role, Passaglia provides strategic leadership and operational oversight for the center's administrative infrastructure, supporting its scientific programs, shared resources, clinical research, community engagement, and educational initiatives. [Read More](#)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

[Cellular 'Neighborhoods' Inside Tumors May Predict Which Patients With Melanoma Benefit From Combination Immunotherapy](#)

[UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[Blood-Based DNA Signals May Help Track Osteosarcoma in Children](#)

[The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[New Study Reveals How Obesity Biologically Contributes to Cancer Risk](#)

[Winship Cancer Institute at Emory University](#)

[Review Details Rising Endometrial Cancer Rates, Impact of New Precision Treatments](#)

[Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[Scientist Studies Where Brain Cancer Cells Hide and How to Fight Them](#)

[University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[New Scoring Tool Shows Radiation Can Reprogram Pancreatic Tumor Environment](#)

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

[Molecules Produced by Gut Microbes Linked to Colon Cancer Risk](#)

[Cedars-Sinai Cancer](#)

[Pesticide Residue May Play Role in Increased Rates of Lung Cancer in Non-Smokers Under Age 50](#)

[USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[High Antibodies Create Disparities in Donor Search for Blood and Bone Marrow Transplants](#)

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

[Researchers Identify Cellular Pathways That Drive Precancerous Lesions to Form Pancreatic Tumors](#)

[University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center](#)

[Investigators Turn Cancer Mutation Into a Chemical Handle for Precision 'Molecular Glues'](#)

[Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University](#)

[Low-Cost Blood Test Developed to Detect Multiple Cancers and Other Diseases From a Single Sample](#)

[UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[Research Seeks to Determine if Circadian Disruption Increases Risk for a Type of Carcinoma](#)

[Fred Hutch Cancer Center](#)

[If You Haven't Heard of Lynch Syndrome You Are Not Alone](#)

[UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[Researchers Publish Review Defining 'Hallmarks of Liver Cancer'](#)

[Mount Sinai Tisch Cancer Center](#)

[Using Imaging to Measure Body Composition May Improve Cancer Risk Assessment in Postmenopausal Women](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

[Real-World Data Show Targeted Therapy Extends Survival in Aggressive Form of Colorectal Cancer](#)

[Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

[Three Patients Treated With Novel Theranostics Drug in First-in-Human Clinical Trial](#)

[Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah](#)

[AML Mutation Initiates Primary Cancer, Not Required for Disease Maintenance](#)

[Stanford Cancer Institute](#)

OTHER NEWS

[Tell FDA: Reconsider Allowing Flavored E-Cigarettes](#)

[Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson](#)

Salud America!, part of the Institute for Health Promotion Research at UT Health San Antonio, has drafted a model public comment on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) plan to consider allowing some flavored e-cigarettes on the market. Any new vape flavors could only be marketed to adults, but public health leaders warn that the FDA's new guidance does not account for the toxicity of flavored e-cigarettes, particularly when used in conjunction with combusted cigarettes, and does not offer sufficient evidence of an added benefit to adults who smoke. Comments are due **Monday, May 11**. [**Submit Public Comment**](#)

[Countdown Begins to Opening of AbbVie Foundation Cancer Pavilion](#)

[The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)



UChicago Medicine will open the AbbVie Foundation Cancer Pavilion, a first-of-its-kind freestanding facility on Chicago's South Side, in April 2027. Designed to redefine cancer care, research, and the patient experience, the 575,000-square-foot facility is among the largest and most ambitious projects in UChicago Medicine's history. [Read More](#)

[Inspiring a New Generation of Cancer Researchers](#)

[University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)



As part of its commitment to training the next generation of scientists, the UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center established the Cancer Research Training and Education Coordination Core (CRTECC) program for high school and middle school students. **Jennifer Gillette, PhD** (pictured in her lab with a CRTECC participant), is associate director of Education, Training and Mentoring. [Read More](#)

[How Rethinking the Basics Improved Wait Times for Abdominal Cancer Patients](#)

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



MUSC Hollings Cancer Center Surgical Oncology Chief **Kevin Roggin, MD**, is reimagining clinic scheduling procedures to improve access for patients with hepato-pancreato-biliary and other abdominal cancers at MUSC Hollings Cancer Center. The goal of the Next-Day Access program is to give eligible patients the option to schedule an appointment within 48 hours. [Read More](#)

[USC, Tempus AI Form Strategic Collaboration](#)

[USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

The Keck School of Medicine of USC and Keck Medicine of USC have launched collaborations with Tempus AI, Inc., a technology company at the forefront of applying artificial intelligence to precision medicine, to integrate clinical care, clinical trials, and research through a unified framework. The goal of this strategic collaboration, which will include the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, is to enhance patient care and accelerate research and innovation. [Read More](#)

[Endorse Comment on NIH Strategic Plan](#)

[Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson](#)

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, MPH, associate director of cancer outreach and engagement at Mays Cancer Center, is sharing a comment on 13 key areas that drive the Latino cancer burden as part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2027-2031. Endorsements are due by 11:59 pm eastern time on **Tuesday, May 26**. [Learn More](#)



[Web Tool Helps Patients Share Genetic Testing Results With Family](#)

[University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center](#)



While oncologists focus on their patients, they rarely follow up with family members who may be at increased risk of cancer. A web-based intervention could help educate people with cancer about the impact genetic variants may have on their family. Researcher **Steven J. Katz, MD, MPH**, and colleagues at the University of Michigan Health Rogel Cancer Center developed the tool, called Genetic Information and Family Testing, or GIFT. [Read More](#)

[New Facility Offering Proton Therapy for Pediatric, Adult Cancer Patients](#)

[Stanford Cancer Institute](#)



Stanford Medicine is opening a first-of-its-kind facility to deliver a form of radiation therapy that has been difficult for cancer patients to access. Stanford's innovation—in collaboration with two medical technology companies—is to drastically shrink the size and cost of the machinery used to deliver proton therapy. [Read More](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

[Assistant Director, Clinical Research Operations](#)

[Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center, Columbia University Irving Medical Center](#)

[Cancer Bioinformatics Co-Director](#)

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

[Director, Department of Oncology \(Chair\)](#)

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

[Gynecologic Oncology Physician](#)

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

[Senior Director, Perlmutter Cancer Center Research Administration](#)

[Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center at NYU Langone Health](#)

MEETINGS & EVENTS

[2026 AACI/AACR Hill Day](#)

[REGISTRATION CLOSES SOON!](#)

[May 14, 2026](#)

[Washington, DC](#)

[2026 Inaugural Marrow Masterclass](#)

Hosted by Karmanos Cancer Institute, Wayne State University

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[May 16, 2026](#)

[Dearborn, MI](#)

[Rural Health and Cancer Conference](#)

Hosted by The University of Vermont Cancer Center

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[June 2, 2026](#)

[Burlington, VT](#)

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

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[June 23-25, 2026](#)

[Rosemont, IL](#)

[2026 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[October 25-27, 2026](#)

[Chicago, IL](#)



[Impact Summit](#)

Hosted by AACI in partnership with the Cancer Center Network

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[October 24, 2026](#)

[Chicago, IL](#)



[AACI Leadership Development Workshop](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[October 24-25, 2026](#)

[Chicago, IL](#)

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