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

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

## AACI HEADLINES

### [Wilmot Cancer Institute Earns NCI Designation](#)



The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has named the University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute as the nation's 73rd designated cancer center. **Jonathan W. Friedberg, MD, MMSc**, is the institute's director. NCI designation comes with five years of funding to expand patient access to clinical trials, develop new research initiatives, support community outreach geared toward cancer prevention and awareness, and improve access to cancer services, with a focus on underserved areas. [Read More](#)

### [Patient Advocate, Educational Coach to Keynote CRI Meeting](#)



Patient advocate **Loriana Hernández-Aldama** will present the opening keynote on **Monday, June 23**, during the **17th Annual AACI Clinical Research Innovation (CRI) Meeting** in Rosemont, IL. On **Tuesday, June 24**, **Chad Fritsche**, a certified health and wellness coach at Mayo Clinic's Dan Abraham Healthy Living Center, will deliver the second keynote address. [Read More](#)

### [Register for Our Next PCLI Webinar](#)

**Registration** is open for an upcoming AACI webinar, hosted by AACI's **Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative (PCLI)**. "**Healing Waves: How Hawaii is Turning the Tide on Cancer Inequities**," is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 9**. AACI webinars are free and open to all faculty and staff at our member cancer centers. [Read More](#)



## [AACI Executive Director Shares Economic Impact of NIH, NCI](#)



On **Sunday, March 23**, AACI Executive Director **Jennifer W. Pegher** appeared on "**Our Region's Business**," a Pittsburgh business affairs program produced jointly by WPXI-TV and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

Pegher shared the impact of federal investments in the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute and explained how disruptions to cancer research and clinical trials could mean the difference between life and death for patients with cancer.

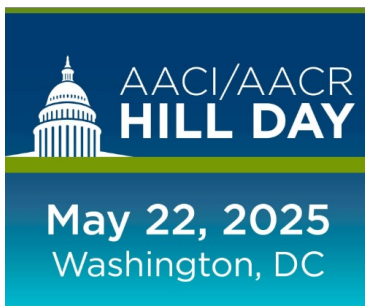
[Watch Now](#) | [Read More](#)

## [A New Tool for Communicating the Benefits of Federally Funded Cancer Research](#)



With its new **Defending Cancer Research Digest**, AACI aims to expand awareness of the very real benefits of research funded by the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute. We hope you'll read through the stories we've collected and share them widely on social media, through your institutions' communication channels, and in your communities. **Please send us your cancer center's stories**, especially those focused on patients and the positive outcomes they've experienced thanks to research and care supported by federal funding. [Read More](#)

## [Nominate a Patient Advocate for a Hill Day Scholarship](#)



This year AACI is offering **scholarships** of up to \$1,000 to enable patient advocates to attend **Hill Day** and share their important perspectives during congressional meetings. Nominations are due **Friday, April 11**. Up to five scholarship recipients will be selected and the cancer center representative submitting the application will be notified of their nominee's status by **Friday, April 25**. [Read More](#)

## [Workshop Inspires Future Cancer Center Leaders](#)

The **2025 AACI Leadership Diversity and Development Workshop**, held **March 11-12**, drew nearly 100 attendees, with 82 cancer centers represented. Many thanks to all the AACI member colleagues and supporters who joined us in Rosemont, IL. Attendees reflected the deep pool of talented emerging leaders who are accelerating progress against

cancer at AACI cancer centers. [Read More](#) | [View Photos](#)



## [Reminder: Nominations Open for 2025 AACI Awards](#)



*Pictured, clockwise from top: 2024 recipients of AACI's Champion for Cures, Distinguished Scientist, and Cancer Health Equity awards  
Photos by Randy Belice*

There's still time to submit nominations for the 2025 [Cancer Health Equity](#) and [Champion for Cures](#) awards. The submission deadline for both awards is **Friday, May 2**. Any faculty and staff at an AACI member institution may submit a nomination for one or both awards. Recipients will be selected from the slate of nominees by AACI's Board of Directors. [Read More](#)

## NEWS FROM THE CENTERS

### AWARDS & HONORS

## [Reddy Elected 2024 AAAS Fellow](#)

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



**Pavan Reddy, MD**, director of the Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine, has been elected to the newest class of American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellows. Reddy is recognized for his work to revolutionize the care of patients to control graft-versus-host disease. [Read More](#)

## [Researchers Named National Academy of Inventors Senior Members](#)

[Siteman Cancer Center](#)

Three Washington University scientists at Siteman Cancer Center have been named senior members of the National Academy of Inventors. They are **Aaron DiAntonio, MD, PhD**; **John DiPersio, MD, PhD**; and **Srikanth Singamaneni, PhD**. [Read More](#)



## [Alycia So Inducted Into Philadelphia Academy of Surgery](#)

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



Fox Chase Cancer Center's **Alycia So, MD**, was recently inducted as a fellow into the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery. Founded in 1879, the academy is the oldest continuously meeting surgical society in the United States. [Read More](#)

## [Intensive Care Unit Earns National Recognition](#)

[Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Intensive Care Unit has earned the Beacon Award for Excellence from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. The bronze award marks the cancer center's second national award for nursing excellence so far this year, joining Magnet® Recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. [Read More](#)

## [McCluggage Makes UCSF Nursing History](#)

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



Oncology nurse **Julie McCluggage, RN, OCN, CRN-BC**, is the first nurse in UCSF history to earn the rigorous Clinical Research Nurse-Board Certified (CRN-BC) credential. McCluggage, who has been caring for UCSF patients for 29 years, helped establish and works with the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center's Cancer Immunotherapy Program (CIP). [Read More](#)

## [Thyroid Cancer Research Team Wins Award](#)

[University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center](#)

The Thyroid and Thyroid Cancer Research team, or ThyCARE, at the Rogel Cancer Center received the inaugural Endocrine Care Innovation Award from the American Association of Endocrinology. [Read More](#)

## [Bhardwaj Named AACR Fellow](#)

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

**Nina Bhardwaj, MD, PhD**, was named a Fellow of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Academy Class of 2025. Dr. Bhardwaj was recognized for her research on human dendritic cell biology, including the development of Toll-like receptor agonist- and





dendritic cell-based vaccines for cancer and infectious diseases. [Read More](#)

## [Monje Receives Lundbeck Foundation Brain Prize](#)

[Stanford Cancer Institute](#)



Stanford Cancer Institute member **Michelle Monje, MD, PhD**, was honored for her transformative research showing that nervous system activity can promote cancer initiation, growth, spread, and treatment resistance. These discoveries have laid the foundations for a new field of research called cancer neuroscience that represents a paradigm shift in the understanding of these cancers. [Read More](#)

## [Bossmann Selected as Senior Member of the National Academy of Inventors](#)

[The University of Kansas Cancer Center](#)



**Stefan Bossmann, PhD**, was selected by the National Academy of Inventors to join the 2025 class of senior members. He is the first senior member from KU Medical Center. The academy recognizes and promotes academic invention. [Read More](#)

## [Three Faculty Named Most Highly Cited Researchers](#)

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



Fox Chase Cancer Center's **Hossein Borghaei, DO, MS**; **Elizabeth Plimack, MD, MS**; and **Lorenzo Galluzzi, PhD**, have been named to the 2024 list of Highly Cited Researchers by Clarivate, a leading global provider of transformative intelligence. [Read More](#)

## [Zhan Invested in Inaugural Chair for Myeloma Research](#)

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



Medicine has invested **Fenghuang “Frank” Zhan, MD, PhD**, research director of the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute’s Myeloma Center, in the Dr. Bart Barlogie Chair for Myeloma Research. Dr. Zhan is the inaugural holder of the endowed chair. [Read More](#)

## [Negrin New President-Elect of ASH](#)

[Stanford Cancer Institute](#)



Stanford Cancer Institute senior advisor **Robert Negrin, MD**, was named president-elect of the American Society of Hematology (ASH). An ASH member since 1998, he has served across various ASH committees and working groups and most recently served as the founding editor-in-chief of *Blood Advances*. [Read More](#)

### GRANTS & GIFTS

## [AI Technology for Therapeutic Antibody Discovery to be Developed](#)

[Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center](#)

## [Nowicki Awarded \\$4.5 Million NCI Grant to Advance Next Generation of Cellular Immunotherapies for Solid Tumors](#)

[UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Scientist Awarded \\$1.9 Million to Study Air Pollution, Breast Cancer](#)

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

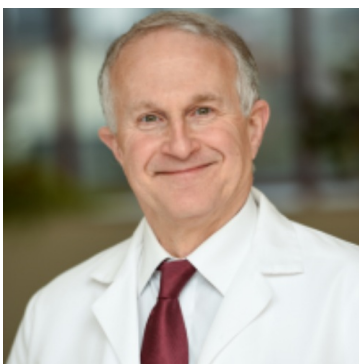
## [\\$1.2 Million Grant Will Fund Study on Possible Cancer Risk Linked With Neighborhood Environment](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

### LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

## [Miller Named Interim Cancer Center Director](#)

[Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota](#)



The Masonic Cancer Center (MCC) has announced that **Jeffrey Miller, MD**, (pictured) will serve as the center’s interim director. The center extends its deep appreciation to **Douglas Yee, MD**, for his leadership over nearly 18 years. Under Dr. Yee, MCC earned its best-ever Cancer Center Support Grant score from the National Cancer Institute, locking in critical federal funding through January 2029. [Read More](#)

## Inaugural Leader of Global Oncology Initiative Appointed

Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah



Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) at the University of Utah announces the appointment of **Deanna Kepka, PhD, MPH**, investigator at HCI and professor in the College of Nursing, as the inaugural leader of the Global Oncology Initiative. Dr. Kepka brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to cancer prevention and global health. [Read More](#)

## New Co-Lead for Biobehavioral Cancer Control Program

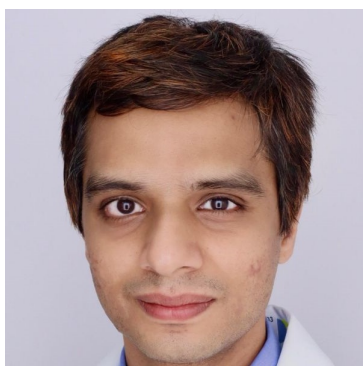
UPMC Hillman Cancer Center



**Marci Lee Nilsen, PhD, RN, CHPN, FAAN** is the new co-lead of UPMC Hillman Cancer Center's Biobehavioral Cancer Control program. Dr. Nilsen is also director of the Head and Neck Cancer Survivorship Program, a professor in the Department of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) School of Medicine, and an affiliate member of Pitt's Center for Bioethics and Health Law. [Read More](#)

## Specialist in Thoracic Cancers and Primary CNS Tumors Joins Center

GW Cancer Center



The GW Cancer Center announces the addition of **Prashanth Ashok Kumar, MD**, to its hematologist-oncologist team. With a background in thoracic oncology, Dr. Ashok Kumar brings a wealth of expertise in diagnosing, treating, and managing cancers affecting the lungs, esophagus, and chest. [Read More](#)

## Chief Surgical Officer Appointed

Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University



Breast cancer surgeon **Tari A. King, MD, FACS, FSSO, FASCO**, has been appointed chief surgical officer for the cancer service line at Winship Cancer Institute and Emory Healthcare. She will also serve as chief of the newly formed Division of Breast Surgery in the Department of Surgery at Emory University School of Medicine and as co-director of Winship's Glenn Family Breast Center. [Read More](#)

## [Carpenter Announced as President of SPEROS FL](#)

[Moffitt Cancer Center](#)



Moffitt Cancer Center and its wholly owned subsidiary SPEROS FL, a 775-acre global innovation campus, has announced **Josh Carpenter, D.Phil.**, as the president of Speros and Moffitt's chief integration officer. Dr. Carpenter will unite Speros and Moffitt's clinical and research expertise with commercial partners to accelerate breakthroughs in cancer prevention and treatment. [Read More](#)

## [Co-Leader of Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program Named](#)

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



**Tracy Smith, PhD**, (pictured) has joined **Ashish Deshmukh, PhD**, as a co-leader of the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program at MUSC Hollings Cancer Center. Dr. Smith's research focuses on reducing the harms associated with smoking and moving people away from combustible tobacco products. [Read More](#)

### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

## [Study Aims to Better Understand Cancer Risk for Firefighters](#)

[Duke Cancer Institute](#)

## [Eat Better, Breathe Easier? Research Points to Link Between Diet, Lung Cancer](#)

[University of Florida Cancer Center](#)

## [Pre-Surgical Cabozantinib May Improve Kidney Cancer Outcomes](#)

[Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University](#)

## [Treatment Strategy Reprograms Brain Cancer Cells, Halting Tumor Growth](#)

[UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Chemo-Immunotherapy Approach Shows Potential Benefit in Patients With Advanced HPV-Negative Head and Neck Cancer](#)

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

## [Repurposed FDA-Approved Drug Could Help Treat High-Grade Glioma](#)

[University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center](#)

## [Breakthrough Combination Therapy Tackles Drug Resistance in Lung Cancer With Common KRAS Mutation](#)



## [New Cell Surface Targets for Advanced Prostate Cancer Highlighted](#)

[Duke Cancer Institute](#)

## [Researchers Learn How a Drug Called Zotatfin Kills Cancer Cells](#)

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

## [Study Unveils Benefits of Precision Exercise for Lung Cancer Surgery Patients](#)

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

## [Hope for Immunotherapy as Prostate Cancer Treatment](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

## [New Insights Into the Origins of Ovarian Cancers](#)

[UPMC Hillman Cancer Center](#)

## [PGV001, a Multi-Peptide Personalized Neoantigen Vaccine Platform: Phase I Study](#)

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

### OTHER NEWS

## [Partnership Gives Veterans Greater Access to Clinical Trials](#)

[The University of Kansas Cancer Center](#)

Veterans in the U.S. face numerous health care challenges, including limited access to early-phase cancer clinical trials. In response, The University of Kansas Cancer Center and the Kansas City Veteran Medical Center have entered an agreement designed to address this gap and expand access to clinical trials for veterans. [Read More](#)

## [AI Technology Helps to Analyze Colonoscopies](#)

[Fred Hutch Center Center](#)

When performing colonoscopies, endoscopists can miss polyps that are flat and don't stick up into the middle of the colon, making it more likely that an undetected polyp may go on to develop into colon cancer. These stealth polyps are a perfect match for GI Genius, a new artificial intelligence (AI) technology that Fred Hutch is using to read colonoscopy scans. [Read More](#)

## [Oncology Patient Navigator Training Now Available](#)

[GW Cancer Center](#)

GW Cancer Center has launched an updated free on-demand course titled Oncology Patient Navigator Training: The Fundamentals. The revised training aligns with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Professional Oncology Navigation Task Force Practice requirements. Learners can receive a certificate of completion or 14 continuing education credits for Certified Healthcare Education Specialists, or 14 nursing contact hours or 14 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. [Read More](#)

## [Community Health Van Launched](#)

[Siteman Center Center](#)

Siteman Cancer Center has unveiled a rolling resource to improve community health across the region. The 40-foot "Health on the Move" community van, operated by Siteman's Program for Elimination of Cancer Disparities, will bring cancer screenings directly to residents of St. Louis and 82 counties in Missouri and Illinois. Public health coordinators **Naomy Gonzalez Aza** (left) and **Kimberly Thorwegan** are pictured. [Read More](#)



## [New Non-Surgical Robotic Focused Ultrasound Procedure for Prostate Cancer Offered](#)

[VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center is offering a form of noninvasive robotic ultrasound treatment for early- to intermediate-stage prostate cancer patients. The technology—High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU)—harnesses high-intensity ultrasound waves to target cancerous prostate tissue, without invasive surgery or radiation. [Read More](#)

## [First Mobile Lung Screening Program in Indiana to Bring Life-Saving Care to Eligible Hoosiers](#)

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

Indiana's first mobile lung screening program, which includes a 40-foot truck with a CT scanner, is bringing life-saving lung screenings directly to Hoosiers across the state. The program will offer a convenient and accessible way to detect lung cancer early, when it is most treatable. [Read More](#)

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

## [Associate/Full Professor, Biostatistics](#)

[The University of Arizona Cancer Center](#)

## [Chief, Division of Oncology](#)

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

## [Vice Chair for Clinical Research](#)

[VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Vice Chair, Bone Marrow Transplant & Cellular Therapies](#)

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

## [Director, Early Phase Clinical Trials](#)

[UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

## [Translational Scientists - Breast Cancer, Leukemia/Myeloma, Lung Cancer](#)

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

## [Biostatistician](#)

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

## [Chief, Division of Neuro-Oncology](#)

[UCI Chao Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)

### AACI WEBINARS

# [PCLI Webinar | Healing Waves: How Hawai'i is Turning the Tide on Cancer Inequities](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[April 9, 2025 | 3:00 pm ET](#)

## 2025 AACI MEETINGS

### [2025 AACI/AACR Hill Day](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[May 22, 2025](#)

[Washington, DC](#)

### [17th Annual AACI CRI Meeting](#)

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

[June 23-25, 2025](#)

[Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel](#)

[Rosemont, IL](#)

### [2025 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting](#)

[SAVE THE DATE](#)

[October 19-21, 2025](#)

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