DCI E-news

Duke Cancer Institute

DCI E-News is a monthly newsletter sharing the latest DCI and oncology-related announcements, feature stories, and news updates. For more, visit the DCI Blog.

Happy New Year 2024

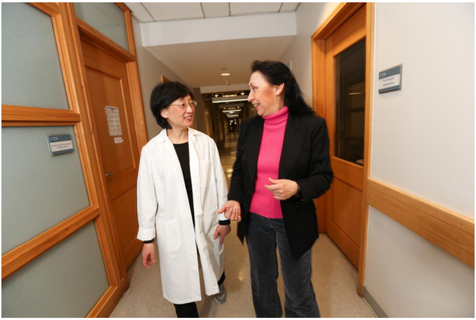
In the Spotlight

Bladder Cancer Breakthrough Dramatically Extends Survival

For the first time in nearly 40 years, there's a new first-line treatment for patients with advanced urothelial cancers that will extend their survival.

Christopher Hoimes, DO, a medical oncologist in the DCI Center for Prostate and Urologic Cancers has been studying this breakthrough treatment combination since 2017, when he was part of a team developing the idea for the combination. READ

Pendergast Awarded Grant to Study Therapy Resistance in Aggressive Lung Cancer Subtype



Ann Marie Pendergast, PhD, the Anthony R. Means Cancer Biology Distinguished Professor (Department of Pharmacology & Cancer Biology), has received a two-year $150,000 Lung Cancer Research Foundation (LCRF) grant to continue her laboratory work “uncovering novel vulnerabilities to treat small cell lung cancer therapy resistance.”

The LCRF grant was one of two national awards bestowed by the nonprofit to recipients whose projects focus on combating therapeutic resistance. READ

Charlotte Woman Faces Brain Mets With 'Faith and a Good Team'

Heather Gensler spent two years being told that, "if it hurts, it's not cancer."

The 37-year-old from Charlotte, NC, found a lump in her breast when she was in her mid-20s. At 29, Gensler saw her gynecologist, for a routine well-woman exam and told her that she planned to have cosmetic surgery to remove the lump.

"She told me that she didn't like the feel of it, she didn't like the size of it, she didn't like anything about (the lump)," Gensler said. READ

Clinic & Community News

ICYMI: The 2023 Tree of Hope Shined Brightly in Support, in Honor, and in Memory, of Those Touched by Cancer

On December 7, the **Duke Cancer Patient Support Program** hosted its 33rd Annual Nancy Weaver Emerson Tree of Hope — an evening to honor and remember loved ones, patients, care team members, family, and friends whose lives have been affected by cancer. The program, which was held in the Cancer Center Lobby, included the debut of the 2023 installment of the Many Faces of Cancer and continued with the Tree-of-Hope lighting in the Seese-Thornton Garden of Tranquility.

Thank you to all who shared this special night with us!

DUKE CANCER CENTER

Tree of Hope Ceremony

Many Faces of Cancer

HEAR FROM Deputy Director of Duke Cancer Institute **Steve Patierno, PhD**, multiple myeloma survivor **Jacqueline Weatherly**, medical family therapist **Tracy Berger**, colon cancer survivor Jennifer Applegate, oncologist **John Strickler, MD**, and Supportive Care & Survivorship Director **Cheyenne Corbett, PhD.**

VIEW the new Many Faces of Cancer portrait series, which is hung at the 1st floor entrance to Duke Cancer Center Durham.

LISTEN to the powerful stories of individuals navigating the cancer experience — each in their own way.

American Cancer Society Commentary: Medicaid Expansion Will Prove Extremely Valuable in the Fight Against Cancer

"The Tar Heel State should feel a sense of pride and relief for the nearly 600,000 North Carolinians who are now eligible for affordable health insurance through Medicaid...In fact, we know having health coverage is a top indicator of a patient's chances of surviving cancer.

As my colleague and Duke professor **Dr. Arif Kamal** would say, cancer is curable if it's caught early, but it's only caught early if it's screened for, and screening requires appropriate health insurance." READ

cancernetwork
Around the PRACTICE
INSTITUTIONAL INSIGHTS

WATCH: Advancements in Treatment Strategies for HER2+ Metastatic Breast Cancer

In this Cancer Network 'Around the Practice program,' experts from the **Duke Center for Brain and Spine Metastasis (DCBSM)** discuss the case of a 66-year-old patient with grade 3 triple-positive breast cancer who presents with multiple liver and bone metastases after front-line treatment with trastuzumab and letrozole. WATCH

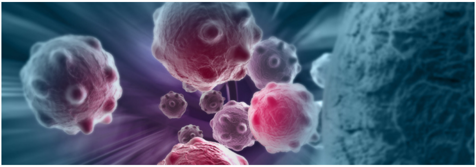
WATCH: **Michael Lidsky, MD**, Interviewed on the History of the HAI Pump & Its Potential Role in Colorectal Cancer Treatment

GIOncologyNow

Duke Surgery
Duke University School of Medicine
Division of Surgical Oncology
GIOncology

READ TRANSCRIPT

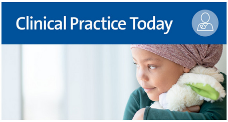
Duke's Cancer Screening Programs Identify High-Risk Patients for Early Intervention



General cancer screening recommendations — and their value in saving millions of lives — hinge upon providing patients with the most accurate and appropriate cancer risk assessments. The primary outcome of proper risk calculation and screening is detecting, diagnosing, and treating cancer with the earliest intervention to achieve the best possible outcomes and long-term survival. Duke's Cancer Genetics Clinic provides comprehensive risk assessments for dozens of hereditary cancer syndromes, including breast and ovarian cancer (including the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations), pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer, and colon cancer. READ

Duke Increases Equitable Access to Pediatric Brain Tumor Care

A collaborative effort between The Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center and Duke Children's Hospital removes traditional systemic barriers for families to access complex pediatric brain tumor treatment — enabling worldwide access to potentially life-saving care at Duke. READ



Ingraham Garners APHA Award for Community Work

Kearston L. Ingraham, MPH, assistant director of Community Outreach, Engagement, and Equity, at DCI, was recognized by the American Public Health Association with an APHA Health Administration Section Award. The award, which recognizes her community work in men's health at DCI as well as her contributions to the Section (moderating panels, reviewing abstracts, meetings, etc.), was presented at the APHA 2023 Annual Meeting and Expo in Atlanta. Ingraham, who's working on a DrPH in Leadership, Advocacy, and Equity at Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine, was also awarded an APHA graduate student scholarship.

One VA Cancer Pathway to Rule Them All? Not Quite, Oncology Program Director Tells Colleagues

The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has an extensive series of clinical pathways in oncology that are designed to help clinicians navigate through the treatment of 20 types of cancer, including common types — breast, lung, and colon — and rarer types. The VA National Program Director for Oncology **Michael Kelley, MD,** talked about these strategies at the 2023 Association of VA Hematology/Oncology annual meeting. READ

MORE

Emerging treatments for brain metastases in breast cancer *(Cancer Today)*
Features **Carey Anders, MD**

Sickle cell gene therapy brings hope to Triangle family: 'It is exciting' *(WTVD ABC-11)*
Features **Nirmish Shah, MD**

E-consult program for immune-related toxicities reduces costs, increases patient access *(Healio)*
Features **Afreen Shariff, MD, MBBS**

More addictive and harder to quit: Health groups want Black menthol smokers to know support groups can help *(NBC News)*
Features **Sven-Eric Jordt, PhD**

Interruptions during mammogram readings increase inaccuracies, radiologist burnout *(Health Imaging)*
Features **Sora Yoon, MD**

Rx for resilience: Five prescriptions for physician burnout, *(Medscape)*
Features **Duke Center for the Advancement of Well-being Science**

Breast reconstruction decisions reveal different values held by women *(Healio)*
Features **Ronnie Shammas, MD**

Article overreaches with claim that FDA admitted cancer treatments cause cancer | Fact check *(USA Today)*
Features **Matthew McKinney, MD**

WATCH: Difficult discussions about dying *(Tell Me More with Kelly Corrigan, NJN)*
Features **Kate Bowler, PhD** (Divinity School and DCI patient)

Here's help for deciding who should make end-of-life healthcare decisions *(Los Angeles Daily News)*
Features **Alisha Beth Benner, MD**

New Test Predicts Risk of Cognitive Dysfunction in Older Surgery Patients *(Duke Health News)*
Features **Leah Acker, MD, PhD**

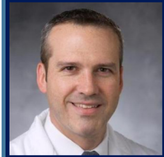
How mistrust and misinformation impacts public health *(WRAL's On the Record Raleigh)*, plus Dean Mary Klotman conversation *(Duke SoM)*
Features **Brian Southwell, PhD**

Duke Health Signs Pledge for Ethical, Responsible AI in Health Care *(Duke Health News)* :: Duke Health transforms workflows with AI 'copilot' *(Becker's Hospital Review)* :: President Biden's executive order on artificial intelligence – implications for health care organizations *(JAMA Network)*

7 best FNP programs in North Carolina – 2023 *(Nursing Process)* :: What is an oncology nurse practitioner? *(Nursing Process)*

Research News

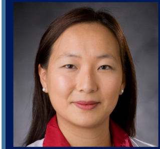
Lab Directors Hanks and Lan Elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation



Brent Hanks, MD, PhD, a professor of Medicine, has dedicated more than 20 years of his career to research in the fields of tumor immunology and immunotherapy. READ

Li Lan, MD, PhD, joined DCI & the Dept. of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology in August 2023. She researches how cancer cells respond to DNA damage through DNA repair mechanisms and ways to target these pathways. READ

Jiang Promoted to Professor of Pathology



Peters Promoted to Professor of Neurosurgery

López Promoted to Associate Professor of Pathology

Mesothelioma Cancer
Centers of Excellence
Teaming Up for New Study
DUKE UNIVERSI
St. Luke's Health
Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center

Duke & Baylor Team Up for New Mesothelioma Study

The type of mesothelioma that forms in the small lining of the lungs — pleural mesothelioma — is the focus of a new clinical study at Baylor and Duke that will test whether immunotherapy for mesothelioma enhances the effectiveness of chemotherapy and surgery. This cancer is extremely rare with an average survival of 12-16 months and median 5-year survival rate of 11%. **David Harpole Jr., MD**, and **Jeff Clarke, MD**, are the Duke site principal investigators. READ

DCI Population Science Pilot Grant Awarded in Prostate Cancer

A research team comprised of **Thomas J Polascik, MD; Kevin Oeffinger, MD; Mahdi Mottaghi, MD; Sriram Deivasigamani, MBBS, MRCS; Kevin Shah, MD, MBA;** and **Steven Patierno, PhD**; was recently awarded a DCI Population Science Pilot Studies grant for their multidisciplinary proposal "Early Longitudinal Outcomes Following Implementation of Baseline Serum Prostate Specific Antigen Risk Stratification among Black and White Men Screened for Prostate Cancer in a Health System-Wide Initiative."

2024 LEADER Cohort Selected

DCI members **Susan McDuff, MD, PhD** (Radiation Oncology) , **Kelly Acharya, MD** (GynOnc/ObGyn), **Nicholas DeVito, MD** (Medicine/GI Onc), and **Hannah Fisher, PhD** (Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences), have been selected to join the 2024 Leadership Development for Researchers (LEADER) Program.

LEADER is designed for junior faculty who are leading a research group and driving their own research agenda. READ

OncLive State of the Science SUMMIT™

WATCH: OncLive/DCI State of the Science Summit

"Institutional Perspectives in Cancer: Leukemia/Lymphoma"

Chaired by **Nelson J. Chao, MD, MBA,** other faculty participants included **Lindsay A.M. Rein, MD, Mitchell E. Horwitz, MD, Matthew S. McKinney, MD,** and **Cristina Gasparetto, MD,** topics included: clinical management of myelofibrosis; chronic GvHD; novel therapies in DLBCL; novel therapies in multiple myeloma. WATCH

MORE

Intratumoural immunotherapy plus focal thermal ablation for localized prostate cancer (*Nature*)
Features **Denis Séguier, Eric S Adams, Srinath Kotamarti, Vincent D'Anniballe, Zoe D Michael, Sriram Deivasigamani, Christopher Hoimes, DO; Thomas Polascik, MD**

Innovators using the technology to understand the body at the smallest scale (*MIT Technology Review*)
Features **Tyler Allen, PhD**

Identification of barriers at the primary care provider level to improve inflammatory breast cancer diagnosis and management (*Preventive Medicine Reports*)
Features **Gayathri Devi, PhD; Laura Fish, PhD; Alexandra Bennion; Gregory Sawin, MD, MPH; Rashmi Saincher, MBBS; Anh N Tran, PhD, MPH.**

Urban environmental exposures and incidence of breast cancer (*The ASCO Post*)
Features **Gayathri Devi, PhD**, and **Larisa Gearhart-Serna**

AEGEAN subgroup analysis fails to demonstrate clear benefit with perioperative Durvalumab plus chemo in EGFR+ NSCLC (*OncLive*)
Features **David Harpole, MD, and Jeff Clarke, MD**

Summit trial produces ‘exciting’ data in systemic mastocytosis, (*Healio*)
Features **Lindsay Rein, MD**

PIM1 kinase inhibitor lowers cytokines in TP-3654 study (*Healio*)
Lindsay Rein, MD

Events

Academic Events

January

View the Duke Centennial Event Calendar
January 2024 — May 2025
(check back often for more listings)

February

Duke 100
1924·2024

FEBRUARY 9 (3:00 PM to 6:30 PM): The MaryAnn Black Distinguished Health Equity Symposium, a Duke 100 Event

LOCATION: Durham Convention Center | 301 W. Morgan St. | Durham, NC

Register/Purchase (free) tickets to secure your spot & Learn More

March

MARCH 1-2: APP Oncology Summit (APP OS) *for NPs, PAs, pharmacists, and RNs
DCI speakers include **Tucker Coston, MD**, on solid tumor screening recommendations; **Vijay Paryani, MD**, on breast cancer; **Margot Mahon O'Neill, PA-C, MHS**, on APP leaders and the path to leadership; and **Rebecca Phillips, MSN, AOCNP, FNP-C**, on immunotherapies in non-small cell lung cancer.

LOCATION: Charlotte, NC

Learn More & Register

MARCH 8 (7:00 AM to 4:00 PM) Southeastern Cardio-Oncology Conference: The Future is Now presented by the Duke Cancer Network in collaboration with Duke Cancer Institute

LOCATION: JB Duke Conference Center

This conference brings speakers from across the southeast to discuss the cardiovascular health of patient with cancer, including compelling sessions on the management of amyloidosis.

Avirup Guha, MBBS, MPH, Augusta Health, will present the keynote "The Evolving Landscape of Risk Stratification with AI." Guha's research explores applying new predictive and early diagnostic AI models in oncology populations. Learn More & Register by March 5

Special Events (general public welcome)

January

NOW through APRIL 6 (ONLINE): Bench to Beat Cancer, a fundraiser hosted by Duke Sports Performance/Duke Olympic Sports Performance at Duke University, in partnership with Duke Cancer Institute, to help alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with a cancer diagnosis

Duke University student-athletes, coaches, and affiliated staff are looking for sponsors to pledge donations based on the number of bench press reps they will perform within one minute on April 7.

Learn More

JANUARY 27 (6:30 PM): Caring House Benefit Gala
This evening of dining, live entertainment, and a live auction is sponsored by Duke Cancer Institute, a Diamond-level sponsor.

LOCATION: Washington Duke Inn

TICKETS: https://caringhouse.org/gala

January Cancer Support Calendar
(click to view)

February

Duke 100
1924·2024

FEBRUARY 9 (3:00 PM to 6:30 PM): The MaryAnn Black Distinguished Health Equity Symposium, a Duke 100 Event

LOCATION: Durham Convention Center | 301 W. Morgan St. | Durham, NC

Register/Purchase (free) tickets to secure your spot & Learn More

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FEBRUARY 25 (2:00 PM): 5th Annual "She Dunks on Cancer Educational Symposium" presented by the Endometrial Cancer Molecularly Targeted Therapy (ECMT2) Consortium

LOCATION: The DeJoy Family Club room, Blue Devil Tower | Wallace Wade Stadium | 110 Frank Basset Dr. | Durham, NC

Followed by a Duke Women's Basketball game at **5:30 PM**

LOCATION: Cameron Indoor Stadium

Register for Symposium & Game Tickets

Team Spirit

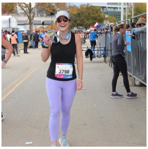
ICYMI: Festive Scenes from Across Duke Health, Including DCI

9/11 First Responder Kicks Off Prostate Cancer FUNdraiser

DCI Tobacco Training Course Attracts Worldwide Audience

Radiation Oncology
DukeHealth

Daughter Fundraises in Mom's Memory for Pancreatic Cancer Research



Kristen Zimmer lost her mother, Tia DeMaria, to pancreatic cancer in June. Tia was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer in late May and spent just two weeks in the hospital before she passed away.

"I don't want that for any other family, and I wanted to do anything I could to help," Kristen says. She decided to run a marathon and raise funds in honor of her mother.

CONTINUE READING ON DCI FACEBOOK (NOV. 28)

This year's Beer and Beards for Bros, held for the first time since 2019, raised nearly $10,000 for research at the **Duke Cancer Institute Center for Prostate and Urologic Cancers**. By all appearances, the event, held at Fullsteam Brewery on Dec. 1, raised even more fun than funds. Fifteen men volunteered to shear their whiskers for the cause, including five firemen from Morrisville, several Duke clinicians, a bartender from Fullsteam, and a retired police detective from New York City. READ

Secord Reports from Seoul

At the 2023 International Gynecologic Cancer Society Annual Meeting in Seoul, South Korea, **Angeles Alvarez Secord, MD, MHSc**, presented real-word data — from the DCI-based Endometrial Cancer Molecularly Targeted Therapy Consortium she leads — on pembrolizumab and lenvatinib prescribing patterns (positive and negative) for endometrial cancer patients.

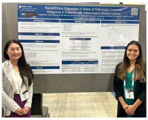
And, in her capacity as President of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology, Secord reported from the 2023 European Society for Medical Oncology Congress in Spain on meaningful gains made in the U.S. in disease control and survival outcomes in ovarian, endometrial and cervical cancer. READ & WATCH

Attendees from as far as the Ivory Coast, India, and Canada, and even a contingent from the Pakistan Ministry of Health attended the "Ask, Advise, Refer and Prescribe: Strategies for Talking to Cancer Patients About Tobacco Use" virtual training course (for CE credit) on Nov. 28. The DCI Smoking Cessation Program (**Quit at Duke**) and DCI's **Community Outreach, Engagement, and Equity** program, with support of public health partners from the community to the state level in North Carolina, sponsored the event.

Duke Cancer Institute
50th Anniversary
Conversation With Our Community Training:
"Ask, Advise, Refer, and Prescribe: Strategies for Talking to Cancer Patients about Tobacco Use"
Moderator: Kearston L. Ingraham, MPH
11.28.2023

SABCS #2023: Gathering to Share Research

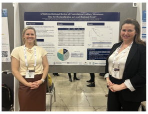
Several members of the DCI breast oncology team and Duke Center for Brain & Spine Metastasis (DCBSM) team presented their research at the international San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium. Contributions included more than 30 posters, 3 rapid-fire presentation, one podium presentation, and one moderated panel. **Carey Anders, MD**, moderated a panel on coordinated care of brain metastasis featuring **Rebecca Dent, MD** (Duke-NUS Medical School) and **Chris Lascola, MD, PhD** (Duke Radiology); and other panelists. **Amanda Van Swearingen, PhD**, presented two posters — one on genomic and immune profiling of breast cancer brain metastases and one on BRIDGET, an ongoing study initiated by DCI for HER2 positive breast cancer patients with isolated brain mets progression.



(at left) Akiko Chiba, MD

THANK YOU TO OU

Carey Anders, MD, Heather Moore, CPP, PharmD, and Rani Bansal, MD



(at right) Astrid Botty, MD

(Thanks to Akiko Chiba, MD, for the images & text shared via X and to the DCBSM, for images & text shared on LinkedIn)

Julie Poucher Harbin, Senior Writer, DCI, is Managing Editor of DCI E-News & the DCI Blog.

FILL OUT THIS FORM to submit announcements of upcoming events; new faculty, fellows, or residents; honors, awards, recognitions, new roles, promotions; and other news you wish to share for potential inclusion in the next DCI E-news or DCI Monthly Update.

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