

Need a Cancer Consult? Check Your Pocket

Hand-Held Device Provides Physicians with Instant Information

What if your primary care physician could reach into his or her labcoat pocket and pull out a handheld personal digital assistant with instant access to information that helps diagnose or treat cancer? And what if this information were available to the medical profession at no charge? In Texas, it is – and the tool that makes it available is becoming more and more popular among physicians and medical residents.

CA-Tools was developed through a cooperative effort of the American Cancer Society, Texas Medical Association and the Physician Oncology Education Program, or POEP.

"The physicians on the American Cancer Society's Health Science Advisory Committee felt that a product such as CA-Tools could assist doctors by

increasing their knowledge and reducing barriers to cancer control issues," said Lewis Foxhall, M.D., associate vice president for health policy at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Foxhall participated in the development of CA-Tools, and is a member of the American Cancer Society's Houston Metro Executive Board of Directors and education subcommittee chair for POEP's steering committee.

"One of POEP's most popular publications has been a laminated card with the American Cancer Society's screening guidelines," says Foxhall. "The committee determined that if this information were available in a PDA application, it could be expanded in several areas."

The CA-Tools program offers the following applications:

- Warning Signs of Childhood Cancer
- Childhood and Adolescent Cancers, types, risk factors and common signs/symptoms
- Skin Cancer Indicators
- Guidance for physicians to assist their patients in quitting smoking
- American Cancer Society Screening Recommendations for the Early Detection of Cancer
- Pain Medication Dosages
- Drug Calculations
- Pain Management Standards
- PSA (Prostate-specific antigen) Information

"As more and more physicians begin using the tool, they will offer their suggestions for expansion of the program," says Foxhall. "This is a good tool, but it is still in its infancy. There are many opportunities for future enhancements."

For more information or to obtain a free download of the CA-Tools, physicians and medical professionals in Texas may log onto <http://www.poep.com>. ■

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Inventor of Asthma Drug to Speak May 15

Cecil Pickett, Ph.D., president of Schering-Plough Research Institute, will present "Drug Development in the 21st Century," at Baylor College of Medicine May 15, as part of the college's Medical Scientist Training Program's annual Visiting Lecture Series. The lecture is open to the public, and will take place at 1:30 p.m. in Baylor's Alkek Building, room N315.

While heading research efforts at the Merck-Frosst Laboratories in Montreal, Pickett discovered the asthma drug Singulair. Subsequently, he joined Schering-Plough in 1993 as executive vice president of discovery research, where he tripled the size of the organization's chemistry group, expanded virtually all its therapeutic areas, and built what he terms "scientific excellence" in the biology sphere.

Under Pickett's leadership, Schering-Plough became a forerunner of new technology by exploring central nervous system disorders and developing three new drugs: Zetia, for lowering plasma cholesterol (recently approved in the United States); Noxafil, a treatment for fungal infections; and Sarasar, a treatment for leukemia and solid tumors.

Researchers requesting a one-on-one meeting with Pickett the morning of the presentation should contact Adi Borovick at (713) 798-5264 or at borovick@bcm.tmc.edu. ■