

## **Fiscal Year 2023 Accomplishments (April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023)**

### **AWARDS AND GROWTH**

Roswell Park's Dr. Elisa Rodriguez appointed to NCCN DEI Directors Forum

Recognizing her successful efforts to address health disparities and improve outcomes in medically underserved populations, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN®) has appointed Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Elisa M. Rodriguez, PhD, MS, to its newly formed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Directors Forum.

Dr. Rodriguez, Roswell Park's Vice President & Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, joins a group of 27 individuals from fellow NCCN Member Institutions who are working on DEI within the healthcare space. The group will work to establish best practices in DEI and encourage diverse representation in oncology.

#### **Sayeeda Yasmeen, MD, appointed to leadership role within Pathology Department**

Sayeeda Yasmeen, MD, has been named Director of the Pathology Network Shared Resource (PNSR).

In this critical role, Dr. Yasmeen will work to promote our capabilities of the PNSR, providing oversight and management of tissue procurement, research histology, and translational pathology. She will have a leading role in improving basic resources such as biospecimens and technologies that support our institutional effort to move forward with patient care in a research setting.

#### **Joyce Ohm, PhD, named Chair of Cancer Genetics and Genomics**

Joyce Ohm, PhD has been named Chair of Cancer Genetics and Genomics as well as the John & Santa Palisano Endowed Chair of Cancer Genetics.

Dr. Ohm joined Roswell Park in 2016 as an Associate Professor of Oncology, providing expertise in the genetic and environmental determinants of cancer. With over 25 years of experience, Dr. Ohm has made seminal contributions to science and is an internationally recognized expert in the interplay of genetic and environmental determinants of cancer and the implications of those interactions for cancer treatment and prevention. Dr. Ohm has led the department in research published in several high-impact journals such as the American Association for Cancer Research's (AACR) Molecular Cancer Research and Nature's Scientific Reports.

#### **Elisa Rodriguez, PhD, named VP & Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Elisa M. Rodriguez, PhD, MS has been appointed our new Vice President and Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) for our Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG). Dr. Rodriguez, who has over 15 years of experience in public health research and education, will

now lead our work to ensure that Roswell is a diverse, welcoming, and inclusive organization across all of its basic, clinical and population research efforts as well as in our educational programs. Collaborating with our departments across the organization, she will work closely with several key leaders in the CCSG, including our CCSG Program leaders and our AD for Cancer Training and Education.

**Nathaniel Ivanick, MD, named Director of Interventional Pulmonology**

The Department of Thoracic Surgery is pleased to announce that Nathaniel Ivanick, MD, has been named the Director of Interventional Pulmonology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

After joining Roswell in August 2019, Dr. Ivanick launched our Monarch program, and today we are the most experienced provider of robotic navigational bronchoscopy in New York State. Dr. Ivanick has opened a clinical trial in photodynamic therapy, as well as two clinical trials in robotic bronchoscopy. He is actively working on both internal and industry programs to enable Roswell to be at the forefront of interventional pulmonology in our region.

**Christopher Stone named Senior Administrator for Pathology and Lab Medicine**

Christopher Stone, CLT, CHT, a longtime employee with our Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, has been appointed to a new leadership role as Senior Department Administrator Laboratory Medicine.

In his new role, Chris is responsible for overseeing all daily operations in laboratory medicine. He will work closely with me as Chair, with Ron Andro and the Clinical Operations team, and with other leadership to establish and implement short and long-term goals of the department — some of which include enhancements to laboratory information systems, expansion of pathology services at community sites, and increased integration of informatics and digital tools into the department.

**Amy Gallagher, PhD, named Employee Resiliency Program Director**

After a national search, The Department of Supportive & Palliative Care is pleased to announce the successful recruitment and appointment of Amy Gallagher, PSY.D, MSHCT, as the new Division of Employee Resiliency Director at Roswell Park.

Dr. Gallagher will now oversee the leadership and growth of the new Employee Resiliency Division across our center and will have the opportunity to apply her considerable knowledge to improve employee experience and wellbeing. She is a licensed psychologist and holds a master's degree in Health Care Transformation & Resiliency. She will work closely with the Chair of Supportive and Palliative Care, Dr. Amy Case, MD, FAAHPM, newly appointed resiliency coordinator, Kelli Cott, BA, Resiliency Committee, administration, and other key stakeholders to develop a strategic plan to build the program.

**Pathology Department leaders spearhead efforts in clinical trial support and workforce diversity**

**Devi Jeyachandran, MD**, a Staff Physician and Assistant Professor of Oncology in the Department of Pathology, has been appointed as the Co-Director of Clinical Research Laboratory Services. In this critical role, Dr. Jeyachandran will provide oversight and management of clinical trial biospecimens and correlative science related to pathology and patient testing. She will also provide support to improve clinical trial research at Roswell Park without compromise to patient care needs and enhance the communication between the Pathology Network Shared Resource and Clinical Research Services on biospecimen feasibility and pathology correlative science for use in clinical trials.

**Nancy Crenshaw, CLT, RN, BSN, MA**, who has successfully led the Clinical Research Support Laboratory for many years, has been appointed as the Co-Director of Clinical Research Laboratory Services (CRLS). In this newly formalized and important role, Nancy — who is a Certified Diversity and Inclusion Recruiter — will work closely with teams including Human Resources, Talent Acquisition and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and will also engage with community leaders, educational institutes and other local organizations to enhance the visibility of laboratory professions and career opportunities within the department.

#### **Beverly Close named permanent Executive Director of Advanced Practice Provider Services**

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Beverly Close, PA-C, as the permanent Executive Director of Advanced Practice Provider Services at Roswell Park. Beverly has provided leadership successfully in the interim role over the last year.

In the permanent role, Beverly will oversee more than 175 advanced practice providers (APPs) across our center and will have the opportunity to apply her considerable knowledge to improve the patient experience and the delivery of high-quality care at Roswell Park.

#### **Ronald Andro named Chief Clinical Operations Officer**

Welcome **Ronald Andro, MS, BSN**, as our new Chief Clinical Operations Officer (CCOO) to Roswell Park.

Since January 2022, Ron has been serving as our interim CCOO following the retirement of Shirley Johnson, advancing several key efforts during this time. In this permanent role, Ron is responsible for overseeing the efficient and effective delivery of clinical operations at Roswell Park, including inpatient services, ambulatory centers, perioperative services, pharmacy, imaging/radiology, radiation oncology, rehabilitation and nutrition services and pathology and lab medicine. He will continue to partner with our Chief Nursing and Chief Medical Officers to ensure that patient care, safety and quality remains at the highest levels. Ron will report directly to me in the CCOO role.

#### **Roswell Park Scientist Tapped to Lead Basic Science Research**

An accomplished research leader with a record of important discoveries in cancer biology and precision therapeutics, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's **Erik Knudsen, PhD**, has

been promoted to Associate Director of Basic Science Research.

A faculty leader at Roswell Park since 2018, Dr. Knudsen has more than two decades of experience, and continuous funding from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). A recognized leader in cancer research, he has spoken around the world about his work — highlighting noteworthy discoveries in the areas of tumor suppression, aberrant tumorigenic proliferation and precision means to treat cancer. He will remain Chair of Molecular and Cellular Biology.

### **Marketing, Development staff present at NACCDO-PAMN meeting**

Gathering with nearly 450 colleagues from National Cancer Institute (NCI) and Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) member centers across the country, a dozen members of our Marketing and Development teams represented Roswell Park at last week's annual meeting of NACCDO-PAMN — the National Association of Cancer Center Development Officers and Public Affairs and Marketing Network.

Roswell Park Chief Marketing Officer Laurel DiBrog was awarded the inaugural PAMN Laureate award by vote of the PAMN steering committee. She was among the Roswell Park team members who gave presentations during the four-day meeting, as were Heidi Findlay, Jennifer Hickok, Annie Deck-Miller and Ashley Snowden, who shared expertise on topics ranging from marketing and physician relations to remote work, science communication and empowering board members to support development goals.

### **Work progresses on Roswell Park Scott Bieler Amherst Center**

We are excited to see the progress on the Roswell Park Scott Bieler Amherst Center on Park Club Lane! Today the final letters were installed on the two-story, 26,000-square-foot new construction in Williamsville, which will open for patient care later this year. Stay tuned to i2 and Roswell Park's social media pages for further updates, and click here to [read more](#) about the project and about Scott Bieler's great generosity to Roswell Park over more than two decades.

### **Seven Roswell Park Physicians Recognized as 'Exceptional Women in Medicine'**

As it celebrates the achievements of some of the nation's most respected and accomplished doctors, healthcare information resource Castle Connolly has recognized seven Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center physician-oncologists as [Exceptional Women in Medicine](#).

The 2023 list is comprised of doctors across 77 areas of specialty who also earned designation as Castle Connolly 2023 Top Doctors based on anonymous physician surveys. Exceptional Women in Medicine are physicians have also demonstrated outstanding leadership, expertise, contributions to research and commitment to volunteer work.

- [Amy Case, MD, FAAHPM](#)
- [Elisabeth Dexter, MD, FACS, FCCP](#)
- [Amy Early, MD](#)
- [Meghan Higman, MD, PhD](#)

- [Tracey O'Connor, MD](#)
- [Denise Rokitka, MD, MPH](#)
- Barbara Bambach, MD

### **Pioneering Hematology/Oncology Expert Joins Roswell Park in Vice Chair Role**

Underscoring Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's ability to attract top clinical and research talent, Deputy Director [Renier Brentjens, MD, PhD](#), has named physician-scientist [Peter Maslak, MD](#), as Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs and Technical Director of the Clinical Flow Cytometry Laboratory.

A pioneer of cell-based treatments for leukemia, Dr. Maslak has been instrumental in conducting and analyzing multiple immune-based clinical trials, particularly those involving new approaches to the disease. He brings more than two decades of experience in clinical flow cytometry, immunophenotyping, and immune monitoring.

### **Castle Connolly Names 38 Roswell Park Physicians to 'Top Doctors' List**

Recognizing physicians who have earned the high regard of fellow physicians, healthcare information resource Castle Connolly has named 38 Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center physicians to its [2023 Top Doctors](#) list. Nationally, only 7% of physicians earned designation on this year's list.

The Roswell Park doctors recognized on this year's list represent 17 areas of specialty, with nine honored in Medical Oncology, four in Thoracic & Cardiac Surgery and four in Urology.

### **Roswell Park Opens Marie E. Bogner Center for Nursing Excellence**

Roswell Park leaders and staff celebrated a new chapter in its history with the dedication of the new Marie E. Bogner Center for Nursing Excellence.

Located just steps away from bustling clinical areas, the 5,126 square foot space houses smart classrooms, flexible skills learning areas and a lactation room. A calm and inviting lounge and breakroom allow staff a moment to relax or work on projects. The new center complements an existing focus on nursing education which includes internships, research opportunities and the Roswell Park Nurse Residency Program for new graduate oncology nurses, the only accredited program of its kind in Western New York.

### **142 Roswell Park Physicians Named to Top Doctors List**

The medical team at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is celebrating a big honor as the year comes to a close with the release of Buffalo Spree magazine's Top Doctors 2023. This year's list includes 142 physicians across 32 specialties, which is compiled through peer surveys of Western New York doctors.

### **Roswell Park Epigenetics Expert Named Chair of Cancer Genetics and Genomics**

Following an international search, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has promoted and appointed [Joyce Ohm, PhD](#), as Chair of Cancer Genetics and Genomics as well as the John &

Santa Palisano Endowed Chair of Cancer Genetics. She previously served as interim chair of the department.

### **Roswell Park Recognized by Buffalo Black Nurses for 'Partnership of the Year'**

In recognition of its efforts to promote diversity in nursing career development and reduce healthcare disparities, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has received the 2022 Partnership of the Year Award from Buffalo Black Nurses Inc.

Roswell Park has been a proud sponsor of the organization's annual gala for the last five years and has collaborated with Buffalo Black Nurses on turkey drives, backpack giveaways and a joint job fair held in September.

### **Roswell Park President & CEO Honored With 'Advocacy in Action Award'**

Recognized for her "extraordinary work and incredible spirit," Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center President & CEO Candace S. Johnson, PhD, was named an Advocacy in Action Award winner by Western New York's Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME, Inc.).

### **Roswell Park Named One of Newsweek's World's Best Specialized Hospitals for Cancer**

Recognizing our efforts globally on delivering high-quality cancer care to our patients, Newsweek has once again named Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center to its list of the World's Best Specialized Hospitals for Oncology 2023. It is the only Buffalo-area center to be included on the full list of 300 top cancer centers internationally.

### **Dr. Ellen Grant Joins Roswell Park in New Role Focused on Community Engagement and Social Responsibility**

After nearly three decades of service-focused work in the fields of education, government, education and nursing, Ellen Grant, PhD, LCSW-R, is returning to healthcare, joining Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in the newly created role of Executive Director for Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Education.

A Buffalo native, Dr. Grant began her career as a nurse, and most recently worked as Deputy Mayor of the City of Buffalo, N.Y. Her previous experience includes leadership roles with Say Yes to Education, where she served as Fellow and Senior Vice President for Chapter Programming; the Erie County Department of Mental Health; and Niagara Falls Medical Center, where she was CEO.

### **Roswell Park Opens The 11 Day Power Play Cancer Resource Center**

Today, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center officially opened The 11 Day Power Play Cancer Resource Center. The newly renovated space is located on the first floor of the main hospital and is a place where patients and their families can find information, support, comfort and connection at Roswell Park. Services in the new space include patient education, wellness activities, self-care and materials for entertainment and comfort. This resource is possible thanks to donations to Roswell Park from The 11 Day Power Play organization.

### **Roswell Park Appoints New Leaders in Key Areas of Clinical Operations and Administration**

The team at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center continues to grow, with three accomplished healthcare executives recruited to oversee key clinical and operational areas. [Ronald Andro, MS, BSN](#), was promoted to Chief Clinical Operations Officer, Catherine Cowan, RN, MSN, has joined Roswell Park as Vice President of Payer Relations and John Kuhns has been appointed to Senior Executive Director of Ambulatory Services.

### **Roswell Park Recognized by Forbes as One of America's Best-in-State Employers**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has been named to Forbes' 2022 list of America's [Best Employers by State](#), based on an anonymous worker survey about workplace culture, benefits and inclusion.

The center ranks at number 11 on Forbes' list of top New York State employers. Forbes worked in partnership with research company Statista, anonymously surveying more than 70,000 Americans working for businesses with at least 500 employees across 25 industry sectors.

### **New Elevate Salon now open in Scott Bieler Clinical Sciences Center**

The Buffalo Sabres Alumni Association has been a dedicated partner of Roswell Park for 15 years, often focusing its giving on efforts that positively impact women with cancer. The new Elevate Salon is made possible in part by a generous gift from the Sabres Alumni in support of all patients who will seek comfort and peace there. Learn more about the salon's offerings on our [Cancer Talk blog](#). We encourage all employees to stop by and see the new space, located on the first floor of the Scott Bieler Clinical Sciences Center.

### **Expanded Roswell Park Head/Neck Center Unites Surgical, Plastic & Reconstructive, Dental Care for Cancer Patients**

Roswell Park today formally reopened its Head & Neck Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Speech Pathology & Dental Center, a 12,600-square-foot outpatient care center now located on the third floor of the cancer center's main hospital serving patients with all cancers of the head and neck (the thyroid, oral cavity, throat, larynx, nose, sinus cavities and pituitary gland) — as well as a full-body plastic surgery and reconstructive program.

The renovation was funded by generous donations from Ann and Bob Brady, who supported the expanded space for head/neck oncology, maxillofacial prosthetics and plastic and reconstructive surgery, and Bernard Weisbond, who supported dedicated space for oral oncology and dentistry services — all united in a single outpatient center.

### **Roswell Park Oncology Experts Named To Castle Connolly 'Top Doctors' List**

National research and information resource Castle Connolly has named 37 Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center physicians to its 2022 Top Doctors List. These experts are nominated through surveys completed by fellow physicians across the country.

The Roswell Park physicians recognized as Castle Connolly Top Doctors spans across 15 different areas of specialty, including eight honored within Medical Oncology, four each in Thoracic & Cardiac Surgery and Urology, and three in both Pediatric Hematology-Oncology and Radiation Oncology.

### **Physician-Scientist Marco Davila, MD, PhD, Joins Growing Roswell Park Cellular Therapy Program**

Following a national search, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has appointed **Marco Davila, MD, PhD**, as Senior Vice President and Associate Director for Translational Research and Vice-Chair for Cellular Therapies.

Dr. Davila comes to Roswell Park after spending seven years at another National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center, Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. While there, this physician-scientist served as a senior member of the Department of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and director of the cell therapy facility.

### **Faculty and student awards for service to education**

The Division of Educational Affairs is pleased to announce the 2022 faculty recipients of Graduate Division awards for exemplary service to education and mentorship. **Barbara Foster, PhD**, from the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education. Dr. Foster was selected by a committee of peers and previous awardees. **Andrei Bakin, PhD**, from the Department of Cancer Genetics and Genomics, was selected by our graduate students to receive the Graduate Student Association Award for Faculty Excellence in Mentoring and Teaching. The awards were announced at this year's Scientific Retreat dinner. Included in the awards ceremony was recognition of clinical faculty and fellows who have contributed significantly to Graduate Medical Education. Graduate students were also recognized for their exceptional service as teaching assistants, summer program mentors and lecturers.

### **'High Performing' designation for 4 Roswell Park teams**

Please greet our colleagues from the Gastrointestinal, Thoracic, Gynecology and Genitourinary Centers with a huge round of applause, as these teams achieved U.S. News & World Report High Performing status in four subspecialty designations — a record for our center:

- **Colon cancer surgery**
- **Lung cancer surgery**
- **Ovarian cancer surgery**
- **Prostate cancer surgery**

This is an outstanding achievement, earned as a result of aiming high and reaching the goals we set for ourselves!

### **Roswell Park Alliance Foundation welcomes new chairperson for Roswell Park Alliance Community Board**



After over 30 years with a pair of steadfast leaders at the helm, the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation will have new leadership on its Alliance Community Board division. Alliance Community Board Co-founders Anne Gioia and Donna Gioia have stepped down from their co-chair roles on the Alliance Community Board. Their retirement from their board leadership position has created an invitation for longtime Roswell Park supporter Terry Bourgeois to pick up their inspiring progress.

### **Roswell Park CIO Leading University at Buffalo Advanced Cyberinfrastructure Research Effort; Team Earns \$10M Grant**

Thomas Furlani, PhD, Chief Information Officer at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, is Principal Investigator on a \$10 million project to develop software that academia, industry and government agencies use to manage high-performance computing infrastructure, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) announced on Friday.

The five-year award to the University at Buffalo will promote U.S. leadership in science and engineering, increase the nation's economic competitiveness and strengthen national security. The funding is through the NSF's highly competitive Advanced Cyberinfrastructure Coordination Ecosystem Services and Support (ACCESS) program.

## **CLINICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Breast cancer pathology experts take the stage at USCAP meeting**

Several Roswell Park breast pathology experts recently presented at the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Roswell Park earned the distinction of ranking first in number of accepted breast-related research abstracts, and first among U.S. centers in podium presentations, with three Roswell Park faculty members giving invited talks: Thaer Khoury, MD, "Clinicopathologic Evaluation of Triple Negative Breast Cancer Treated with Neoadjuvant Immune- and Chemo- Therapy: Attempt to De-Escalate Treatment," Sayeeda Yasmeen, MD, "Ki-67 Evaluation in HR+/HER2- Node-Positive High Risk Early Breast Cancer on Patients Eligible for Abemaciclib Using Artificial Intelligence," and Agnieszka Witkiewicz, MD, "Targeting Cell Cycle Dystopia in Breast Cancer." "These studies collectively aimed to improve patient care, in which pathology plays a central role," says Dr. Khoury, Vice Chair of Anatomic Pathology. "A great example are the studies by Drs. Maha Khedr, Sayeeda Yasmeen, Mokhtar Desouki and Boulos Beshai, which illustrated how crucial it is to have these assays properly performed and accurately interpreted."

### **Roswell Park Surgical Oncologist to Present on Comprehensive Rectal Cancer Treatment Plans**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Chief of Colorectal Surgery Steven Nurkin, MD, MS, FACS, is slated to speak at the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) 2023 Annual Conference, happening March 31-April 2 in Orlando.

Dr. Nurkin, who is also a member of NCCN's Guidelines Panel for Colon/Rectal/Anal Cancers, will present on "Neoadjuvant Treatment Approaches for Stage II-III Rectal Cancer" on Sunday, April 2 at 9:30 a.m. EDT.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the United States. In his presentation, Dr. Nurkin will discuss using chemotherapy, radiation, and for some patients – immunotherapy – as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.

### **Roswell Park Surgeons Share Insights on Up-Front Immunotherapy for Melanoma, Value in Surgical Cancer Care**

Two Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center faculty leaders will give invited talks during symposium sessions as the Society for Surgical Oncology (SSO) gathers this week for the 2023 International Conference on Surgical Cancer Care in Boston, Mass.

Stephen Edge, MD, will share insights on value-based cancer care in surgical oncology in a session he is also co-moderating: Value Based Cancer Care: Where Are We Now? The session runs Thursday, March 23, from 9 to 10 a.m. ET in Ballroom A. Joseph Skitzki, MD, will present "Stage III (Incl PRADO Approach Discussion)" Thursday, March 23, from 9:16 to 9:30 a.m. ET as part of the De-Escalation of Surgery for Melanoma session, and will be part of a panel discussion from 9:45 to 10 a.m. ET — both in Ballroom C of the Sheraton Boston.

Roswell Park surgeons also led or contributed to several studies presented as poster abstracts at the meeting.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Uncover Clues to Immunotherapy Response in Patients with Recurrent Ovarian Cancer**

Research conducted at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center shows that the types of T cells circulating in the blood of patients with recurrent ovarian cancer may predict the likelihood that their disease will respond to an anti-PD1 immunotherapy. The findings, which grew out of a phase 2 clinical trial led by Emese Zsiros, MD, PhD, FACOG, Chair and Director of Research, Department of Gynecologic Oncology, will be highlighted at the Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO) Annual Meeting on Women's Cancer, March 25-28 in Tampa, Florida.

The clinical trial evaluated a novel treatment regimen that combined two immunotherapies — pembrolizumab (brand name Keytruda) and bevacizumab (brand name Avastin) — plus the chemotherapy drug cyclophosphamide (brand name Cytoxan). Nicole Gaulin, MD, Fellow in Gynecologic Oncology at Roswell Park and presenting author, will give the talk "T-cell senescence and T-cell exhaustion as potential biomarkers of progression-free and overall survival in patients with recurrent ovarian cancer treated with anti-PD1 combination therapy" Monday, March 27, at the SGO meeting. It will be part of the focused plenary session On the Horizon: Emerging Therapeutics.

### **NYS DOH Bureau of Tobacco Control visits Roswell Park**

Thank you to members of the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Tobacco Control, including Jennifer Lee, PhD, MPH, Director of the Bureau of Tobacco Control, and staff from the Office of Science at the FDA Center for Tobacco Products for joining us this week to tour our tobacco research labs and discuss the importance of tobacco regulatory science. We were thrilled to also welcome Brian King, PhD, MPH, Director of the FDA Center for Tobacco Products, whose graduate studies included work at Roswell Park. Over the past couple of days, these experts examined significant considerations around health equity and how research done at Roswell Park, including our state, national and international collaborations, can support further efforts led by the FDA.

### **Roswell Park Clinical Trials Add Beta Blocker to Arsenal Against Esophageal Cancer**

Patients with esophageal cancer typically face a poor prognosis, largely because the disease is advanced at the time of diagnosis — and progress toward more-effective therapies has lagged. Now, armed with encouraging results from previous clinical trials, researchers at Roswell Park have launched two phase 2 clinical trials for esophageal cancer. Their goal: to determine whether a beta blocker called propranolol (brand name Inderal) can improve the efficacy of checkpoint inhibitors, a type of immunotherapy. Approved by the FDA in 1968, propranolol is commonly used to treat high blood pressure.

### **Vaping CBD Causes More Severe Lung Damage Than Vaping Nicotine, Roswell Park Study Shows**

Vaping cannabidiol (CBD), a compound found in marijuana, leads to more severe lung damage than vaping nicotine, according to a study out of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Until now, research on the health effects of vaping, or using e-cigarettes, has focused almost exclusively on vaping nicotine as opposed to CBD. Previous research has documented the effects of smoking cannabis, but the effects of vaping cannabinoids such as CBD were not previously known.

Led by Yasmin Thanavala, PhD, of the Department of Immunology, the Roswell Park team has conducted the first study comparing the pulmonary effects of acute inhalation of vaporized CBD and nicotine. The results are shared in a new research paper, "Not all vaping is the same: differential pulmonary effects of vaping cannabidiol versus nicotine," published in the journal *Thorax*.

### **Roswell Park Experts Highlight Benefits of Inpatient Rehab Using Harness System Following Cancer Treatment**

During the 2023 American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) Combined Sections Meeting, to be held February 23-25 in San Diego, California, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center physical therapists Carolyn Miller, DPT, and Hillary Jacobson, DPT, will present on a case study that showed benefits in utilizing body-weight support training as part of a cancer patient's rehabilitation program. Andrew Ray, PhD, PT, Rehabilitation Specialist and co-author of the study, is co-moderating the oncology platform session.

## **Low Income Linked to High Recurrence Risk, Poorer Survival in Women With ER-Positive Breast Cancer**

Patients with early-stage estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer who live in low-income neighborhoods are likelier to have more-aggressive tumors and significantly lower overall survival (OS) than those in higher-income neighborhoods, according to research led by Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. The study, “Association of neighborhood-level household income with 21-gene recurrence score and survival among patients with estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer,” [appears today](#) in *JAMA Network Open*.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> annual Marie Sklodowska-Curie Symposium next week**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center will proudly host the 2nd annual **Marie Sklodowska-Curie Symposium on Cancer Research and Care** next week, September 8-10.

The meeting, organized by **Pawel Kalinski, MD, PhD**, Senior Vice President for Team Science, Chair of Immunology and Chief of the Division of Translational Immuno-Oncology at Roswell Park, will promote collaborations between cancer researchers and care providers, biotech, pharma and policymakers from the U.S., Canada and countries of Central and Eastern Europe. See more on the [meeting website](#) and share the information with contacts who may be interested in taking part, virtually or in person!

## **Roswell Park Investigators Share Advances in Stem Cell Transplantation, Cellular Therapy at Tandem Meetings**

Investigators from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center are among the experts whose work will be highlighted February 15-19 at the 2023 Tandem Transplantation & Cellular Therapy Meetings of the American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (ASTCT) and Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR) in Orlando, Florida.

[Nataliya Buxbaum, MD](#), Department of Pediatric Oncology, will discuss progress toward developing metabolically based diagnostics and personalized treatments to combat chronic graft-versus-host disease in stem cell transplant patients. [Marco Davila, MD, PhD](#), Vice Chair for Cellular Therapies and Senior Vice President and Associate Director for Translational Research, will describe how his lab identified the pathways by which macrophages kill and suppress CD19-targeted CAR T cells, resulting in poor outcomes among patients with B-cell malignancies who receive CAR T-cell therapy. Dr. Davila says the team has now set their sights on “re-training the CAR T cells to be more resistant to metabolic dysfunction induced by macrophages.”

Four Roswell Park experts also will present poster sessions during the Tandem Meetings:

- (300) [Megan Herr, PhD](#), Department of Medicine, Transplant and Cellular Therapy Program, will discuss “Outcomes of HLA-Matched Related Donor (MRD) and Haploidentical Donor (Haplo) Allogeneic Hematopoietic Cell Transplant Recipients by Immune Profiles of Recipients and Donors.”

- (307) Christine M. Ho, MD, Department of Medicine, Transplant and Cellular Therapy Center, will discuss “Recipient Immune Parameters Are Associated with Outcomes after Unrelated Donor (URD) Allogeneic Hematopoietic Cell Transplant (alloHCT).”
- (471) Muhammad Salman Faisal, MD, MBBS, Hematology/Oncology Fellow, will discuss “The First Year of Hematology Oncology Fellows — a Social Media Community for Hematology/Oncology Trainees.”
- (456) Theresa Hahn, PhD, Department of Cancer Prevention and Control, is senior author of “Trends in Utilization of Autologous and Allogeneic Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation in Racial/Ethnic Minorities.”

### **Roswell Park Study: Chronic Opioid Use Reduced by Limiting Prescribed Opioids After Surgery**

Research at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center shows that putting a three-day limit on opioid prescriptions to treat surgical pain after hospital discharge reduces the number of patients who become chronic opioid users without compromising pain relief or recovery. It also reduces the amount of opioids circulating in the community — a grave concern, given that opioids are implicated in 130 overdose deaths in the U.S. every day.

### **Clinical Trial of Roswell Park’s SurVaxM Glioblastoma Vaccine Reveals Promising Results**

A brain cancer vaccine developed at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center appears to be safe and significantly extends survival in newly diagnosed glioblastoma patients, according to a Phase 2A single-arm clinical trial. The study, “Phase 2A Study of SurVaxM Plus Adjuvant Temozolomide for Newly Diagnosed Glioblastoma,” appears this week in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. Manmeet Ahluwalia, MD, MBA, Fernandez Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Cancer Research, Chief of Medical Oncology, Deputy Director and Chief Scientific Officer of Miami Cancer Institute, served as overall Principal Investigator.

Building on information generated by this study, investigators have launched a Phase 2B clinical trial of SurVaxM that aims to enroll 265 newly diagnosed glioblastoma patients at 10 centers across the U.S.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Present New Approach to Understanding Challenging CAR T-Cell Toxicities at ASH 2022**

During the 64th annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology (ASH), held December 10-13 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center predoctoral trainee Payal Goala, MS, BS, will present research findings that hold potential to help address two significant toxicities associated with Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy.

While breakthroughs in cellular therapy treatment have led to major improvements in survival for patients with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (B-ALL), recent investigation has highlighted the negative impact of CAR-T related adverse events, particularly cytokine release syndrome and cytopenias such as neutropenia.

## **Roswell Park Chief of Leukemia Presents Findings of Acute Myeloid Leukemia Study at ASH Annual Meeting**

Eunice S. Wang, MD, Chief of Leukemia at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, led a research effort that supports the addition of gemtuzumab ozogamicin — a CD33-directed antibody-drug conjugate — to standard induction chemotherapy for the treatment of newly-diagnosed intermediate-risk cytogenetic acute myeloid leukemia (AML). The study will be highlighted during an oral presentation at the 64th annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology (ASH), held December 10-13 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Roswell Park teams also took part in sessions on understanding response to vaccines in patients with hematologic cancers, predicting risk of secondary MDS or AML in breast cancer patients, a novel form of immunotherapy for the treatment of primary refractory diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, patient management considerations in the diagnosis and treatment of higher-risk MDS and AML and career development for hematology trainees.

## **Never Too Late to Quit Smoking: New Research Highlights Positive Treatment Outcomes in Head & Neck Patients**

While tobacco smoking has been shown to reduce the efficacy of radiation therapy among patients with head and neck cancers, a new study from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer aims to examine cancer treatment outcomes of smokers.

The research, published in *JAMA Network Open*, examined 518 Roswell Park patients diagnosed with head and neck cancers and were former or current smokers, or have never smoked. Current smokers utilized Roswell Park Cessation Services for 30-days prior to starting treatment. All patients underwent curative chemotherapy and radiation.

## **Roswell Park Scientists Identify Novel Tumor Properties That Drive Metastatic Breast Cancer**

Metastasis, or the spread of cancer cells from a primary tumor to distant organs, lacks effective treatment options and remains a major cause of cancer-related deaths. To better understand how metastasis works — and how it might be controlled — scientists at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center have zeroed in on the role of the metabolic enzyme 6-phosphofructo-2-kinase/fructose-2,6-bisphosphatase-4 (PFKFB4) in the spread of triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC). Their study, “Hypoxic activation of PFKFB4 in breast tumor microenvironment shapes metabolic and cellular plasticity to accentuate metastatic competence,” appears today in *Cell Reports*.

## **Ambrosone Selected For Distinguished Panel at This Week’s San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium**

Christine Ambrosone, PhD, Chair of the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control and the Jayne and Phil Hubbell Family Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention, will join other distinguished speakers at this week’s 45th annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS), running

Tuesday through Saturday, December 6-10, at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Ambrosone was a panelist on the topic “Overcoming the Big Obstacles to Find Solutions to Breast Cancer,” discussing new approaches to address the challenges of accomplishing the goal of not just preventing, but finding a cure for breast cancer. Several other Roswell Park team members shared new research in poster or spotlight sessions throughout this year’s SABCS meeting.

### **New Treatment Strategy Could Boost Efficacy of Immunotherapy in Patients With Solid Tumors**

A multi-institutional team led by researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has identified a novel approach that could potentially improve the efficacy of immune checkpoint inhibitors — a type of immunotherapy — among cancer patients with solid tumors. Findings from this preclinical study demonstrated that the differentiation agent brequinar effectively targeted myeloid-derived suppressor cells (MDSCs) and significantly improved immune checkpoint inhibitor response.

### **Roswell Park, Genome Protection Inc. Team Discovers How Retrotransposons Fuel Drug Resistance in Tumors**

Researchers at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, working in collaboration with Genome Protection Inc. and Children’s Cancer Institute in Sydney, Australia, have discovered a novel way by which highly repetitive genetic components belonging to the LINE-1 family of retrotransposons enable tumors to escape treatment. The study demonstrates that LINE-1 activation can promote treatment resistance by inducing inflammatory pathways. Importantly, existing antiviral drugs overcame this resistance in preclinical cancer models.

The study, published today in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* (PNAS), was led by Andrei Gudkov, PhD, DSci, Senior Vice President, Research Technology and Innovation, and Garman Family Chair in Cell Stress Biology at Roswell Park.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Contribute to AI-Enabled Study That Unravels The Mechanics of Aging And Disease Progression**

Researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, in collaboration with Gero and Genome Protection Inc., recently published new work in *Nature Communications* that demonstrates the power of artificial intelligence (AI) combined with analytical tools borrowed from the physics of complex systems to provide insights into the nature of aging, resilience, and future medical interventions for age-related diseases including cancer.

Modern AI systems exhibit superhuman-level performance in medical diagnostics, like identifying cancer on MRI scans. For this project, the research team went one step further and used AI to figure out principles that describe how the biological process of aging unfolds in time.



### **Pediatric Multicenter Study Shows Targeted Therapy for High-Risk Hodgkin Lymphoma Reduces Relapse**

A targeted therapy for children with high-risk Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) was shown to significantly reduce relapse rates when tested in a large multicenter clinical trial conducted by the Children's Oncology Group (COG) and led by pediatric oncologists at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University. By combining the targeted antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) brentuximab vedotin (BV) with the standard chemotherapy regimen, children were 10% less likely to relapse. The findings were published today in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM).

### **Roswell Park-CIM Study Shows Novel Agent Can Overcome Immune Dysfunction in Cancer**

A collaborative effort between investigators at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Center for Molecular Immunology (CIM) in Havana, Cuba, has revealed a new strategy for correcting immune dysfunction in cancer patients. Findings from this research, which involved both laboratory studies and an early-phase clinical trial, show that a novel immune modulator known as VSSP can significantly reduce myeloid-derived suppressor cells (MDSCs) among individuals with advanced kidney cancer.

This work, recently published in the Journal for ImmunoTherapy of Cancer, opens the door for the development of an immune-modulating therapy that could overcome immune dysfunction — in this case, an overproduction of MDSCs that can aid the progression of cancer — creating more favorable conditions for generating an antitumor response.

### **CAR T-Cell Therapy Proves Effective in First Trial in Patients with Resistant Multiple Myeloma**

A therapy made of immune system T cells engineered to target a somewhat enigmatic cell protein called GPRC5D antigen produced impressive results in its first clinical trial in patients with multiple myeloma, researchers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center report in a new study published today by the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The patients were treated at MSK during the clinical trial and the CAR T cell manufacturing was performed at the institution's Cell Therapy Cell Engineering Facility (CTCEF).

### **Roswell Park's 'WNY Cancer Snapshot': Analysis of New Data Reveals Regional Progress Against Cancer**

One of the core focuses of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Department of Cancer Prevention & Control is to assess the impact of cancer across Western New York (WNY). This team has compiled a new resource to report to the community those cancers that are most prevalent, documenting noteworthy changes in cancer incidence, deaths from cancer and variations in these trends among people of different races or ethnicities.

### **Roswell Park-Developed Immunotherapy Now Part of Nationwide Study in Kids With Brain Cancer**



A brain cancer vaccine developed at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center — SurVaxM — is being utilized in a pilot study in children and adolescents marking the first clinical trial of the immunotherapy in a pediatric population. The multicenter trial is sponsored by the Pediatric Brain Tumor Consortium (PBTC), a group of North American-based academic centers and children’s hospitals that conducts studies toward the goal of improving the outcomes for children with primary brain tumors. PBTC research is supported by the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health under grant number UM1CA081457.

The study is open to children and young adults with several types of brain tumors: progressive or relapsed medulloblastoma, high-grade glioma, ependymoma or newly diagnosed diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma.

### **Roswell Park Expert to Present on Effectiveness of New Combination for Acute Myeloid Leukemia**

On Tuesday, June 7, Eunice Wang, MD, Chief of Leukemia at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, will present the long-term results of a phase 2 clinical trial combining crenolanib, a second-generation FLT3 inhibitor, with standard intensive chemotherapy for treatment of adults with newly diagnosed FLT3-mutant acute myeloid leukemia (AML). Dr. Wang will discuss the findings at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting 2022, at 11:57 a.m. CDT, in Hall S, room 100a, during the Hematologic Malignancies—Leukemia, Myelodysplastic Syndromes, and Allograft oral abstract session (abstract 7007).

### **Roswell Park Presents ‘Highly Encouraging’ Phase 2A Results on SurVaxM Immunotherapy for Glioblastoma**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Professor of Neurosurgery Michael Ciesielski, PhD, is presenting the most recent findings from the completed phase 2A study of the immunotherapy SurVaxM at a poster session tomorrow, June 5, at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) 2022 annual meeting. The largest clinical cancer meeting in the world, the conference continues through June 7 at McCormick Place in Chicago, Illinois.

SurVaxM is an immunotherapy that targets survivin, a protein present in many cancer types that helps cancer cells stay alive. It was first developed at Roswell Park by Dr. Ciesielski and Chair of Neurosurgery Robert Fenstermaker, MD.

### **From ASCO 2022: Brentuximab Vedotin and Chemotherapy an Effective Treatment for Hodgkin Lymphoma**

New research led by Kara Kelly, MD, of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and presented today at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) 2022 Annual Meeting in Chicago shows that a combination of brentuximab vedotin (Bv) and standard chemotherapy is safe and more effective than standard chemotherapy in pediatric patients up to age 21 years with newly diagnosed high-risk Hodgkin lymphoma. The findings from a phase 3 National Cancer Institute-supported multicenter Children’s Oncology Group clinical trial (NCT 02166463)

are being presented by first author Sharon Castellino, MD, of Emory University and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta in an oral abstract session today at 2:12 p.m. CDT.

Bv is an antibody-drug conjugate designed to selectively kill tumor cells expressing the CD30 antigen, a marker of Hodgkin lymphoma, while generally sparing healthy cells. The FDA has approved the use of Bv for the treatment of adults with advanced-stage Hodgkin lymphoma.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Identify New Treatment Target for Prostate Cancer**

A team of researchers at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, led by [Dhyan Chandra, PhD](#), have uncovered evidence that could lead to the development of a new treatment option for patients with metastatic, resistant or recurrent prostate cancer. Their findings, [published today](#) in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, suggest that mitochondrial unfolded protein response — a unique longevity function of mitochondria — could be a new target for the treatment and management of this patient population.

The standard first-line approach for prostate cancer typically targets the main driver of the disease — the androgen receptor signaling axis. While current therapeutic agents initially reduce tumor burden, disease recurrence is likely and, for patients with a hormone-resistant phenotype, drugs that target the androgen receptor are ineffective.

### **Pediatric Lymphoma Trial and Study of FLT3 Inhibitor for Leukemia Highlight Roswell Park Research at ASCO22**

Researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center will present the latest results of clinical trials and insights on cancer treatment and issues affecting patients with cancer, including the financial burdens induced by cancer treatment, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), which will take place both online and in-person in Chicago, Illinois, from June 3 to 7.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Identify Molecular 'Glue' That Sticks to and Degrades a Cancer-Causing Protein**

A small molecule discovered and developed by a team of scientists led by Fengzhi Li, PhD, Associate Professor of Oncology in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, eliminates human pancreatic and colorectal tumor cells by binding to and degrading DDX5, a powerful cancer-causing protein. The latest research results from Dr. Li's lab, published today in *Clinical and Translational Medicine*, suggests that FL118, a compound derived from Chinese tree bark, could be further developed into a targeted treatment for pancreatic cancer and colon cancer, and possibly for other solid and liquid tumors as well.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Identify New Approach to Precision Cancer Treatment**

A multidisciplinary team from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has uncovered a previously unknown function of a gene that regulates p53, a protein that plays a significant role in more than half of all cancers. Their findings, [published this week](#) in the journal *PlosGenetics*, could have big implications for the development of cancer therapies targeting MDM2.

Mutations in the p53 protein, which plays a large role in the body's natural defense against cancer, have been linked to a wide variety of cancers. The protein MDM2 can stop p53's anti-tumor activity, which can lead to cancer development, and many cancer drugs are designed to target MDM2 and restore the ability of p53 to fight tumors.

### **Gabapentin an Effective Alternative to Opioids for Cancer Patients Receiving Radiation, Roswell Park Team Shows**

Patients with head and neck cancer undergoing radiation therapy are less likely to require opioids or a feeding tube if they received a higher dose of prophylactic gabapentin before their treatment, findings from a team of radiation oncologists at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center show. Their discovery, published today in *JAMA Network Open*, suggests that a prophylactic, or preventative, gabapentin dose of 3600 mg daily can delay or eliminate the need for opioids to manage the pain associated with radiation-induced oral mucositis in patients with head and neck cancer.

### **Roswell Park Surgical Technique Enables Faster, Fuller Recovery after Radical Prostatectomy**

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Radical prostatectomy, or removal of the prostate gland and surrounding tissues, is a standard surgical procedure used to treat men with prostate cancer. Robot-assisted radical prostatectomy (RARP) is becoming increasingly common, but as with other radical prostatectomy methods, urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction are common complications of the procedure.

A surgeon's experience and technique dramatically affect the outcome of prostate cancer surgery, and disease recurrence rates drop significantly as surgical experience and techniques improve. In 2008, the hydrodissection method was modified for use in robotics at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center by a highly experienced team co-led by Khurshid Guru, MD, Chair of the Department of Urology and Director, Robotic Surgery and the Applied Technology Laboratory for Advanced Surgery.

### **Roswell Park Nursing Teams Present Findings at 2022 Oncology Nursing Society Annual Meeting**

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Several nursing teams from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center were invited to share their research at the 47th Annual Congress of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), which is underway in Anaheim, California, and continues through May 1, 2022.

Among the specialists discussing new developments and challenges in the practice of nursing at the ONS Annual Congress are Andrew Storer, PhD, DNP, RN, NP-C, FAANP, Vice President and Deputy Chief Nursing Officer at Roswell Park, whose oral presentation on Roswell Park's unique Summer Nursing Research Education Program won a Best of Oral Abstracts in Leadership/Management/Education award.

## **Roswell Park Specialists to Highlight Latest Advances in Blood Cancer Treatment and Cellular Therapy**

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center specialists will share the latest advances and developments in the treatment of blood-related cancers at the 2022 Tandem Transplantation & Cellular Therapy Meetings of American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (ASTCT) and Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR) in Salt Lake City, Utah, from April 23 to 26.

Highlights of Roswell Park's invited presentations at the meeting include discussion of the much-anticipated results of an ongoing clinical trial of a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy for multiple myeloma as well as the management of graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**Jens Hillengass MD, PhD**, Chief of Myeloma, will share the results of CARTITUDE-2, the first study to use a recently FDA-approved CAR T-cell therapy, ciltacabtagene autoleucel (cilta-cel), in patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma after only one to three prior lines of therapy. In an ASTCT Spotlight Session, **Nataliya Buxbaum, MD**, Assistant Professor of Oncology in the Department of Pediatrics and a physician with the Roswell Park Oishei Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Program (pictured at right), will discuss Roswell Park's work to develop a much-needed path to personalized therapy for patients with chronic GVHD. **Muhammad Salman Faisal, MD**, a fellow in the Department of Medicine, will present the findings from two Roswell Park-led studies.

## **NIH Tribal Health Expert to Share Insights in Roswell Park Center for Indigenous Cancer Research Webinar**

Join Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Center for Indigenous Cancer Research (CICR) for a webinar on Tuesday, April 26, at 3 p.m. EST featuring National Institutes of Health (NIH) Tribal Health Research Office Director **David R. Wilson, PhD**.

The discussion, "A Holistic Approach to Improving American Indian/Alaska Native Health," will touch on the NIH's engagement with Native and Indigenous individuals and communities,

efforts to support and inform scientists and clinicians working with Indigenous communities, and the Office's work to draw attention to important considerations regarding research in Indigenous communities. The webinar is free and open to the public.

### **Roswell Park's Dr. Grace Dy Presents Long-Term Data on CodeBreak 100 Sotorasib Study**

New data to be presented at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2022 in New Orleans show that patients with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) who received the targeted therapy sotorasib experienced extended survival and good quality of life. Grace Dy, MD, who led the study at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, will present the longest-term data available from the multicenter CodeBreak100 clinical trial in a plenary presentation today.

Sotorasib, also known as Lumakras, is a targeted anticancer therapy granted accelerated Food and Drug Administration approval in May 2021 for treatment for adult patients with NSCLC whose tumors have a specific genetic alteration — G12C mutation of the KRAS gene — and whose tumors worsened and/or persisted despite earlier treatment. This orally administered drug is the first approved targeted therapy for any KRAS-mutated malignancy. KRAS G12C mutations represent about 13% of mutations in non-small cell lung cancers.

### **Stress Receptors Explored as Possible Immune Checkpoint, Suggesting Role for Beta-Blockers in Cancer Treatment**

Combining a beta-blocker with the cancer immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab could be a promising new treatment option for many hard-to-treat solid-tumor cancers. Researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center demonstrated the safety of this treatment combination in patients with advanced or metastatic melanoma in the first prospective clinical trial of this approach, and will report on a follow-on trial in progress Monday, April 11, at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2022.

A growing body of evidence suggests that stress-induced beta-2 adrenergic signals are independently dampening a variety of antitumoral immune responses and, in turn, functioning as an immune checkpoint.

### **Researchers Seek to Expand Immunotherapy Options for Patients with Advanced Breast and Colorectal Cancer**

Two Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center oncologists will discuss promising strategies for making breakthrough immunotherapies work for more patients at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in New Orleans, Louisiana, on Monday, April 11. Both presentations were accepted as late-breaking abstracts and report findings from clinical trials that advance a novel immunotherapy platform in development at Roswell Park under the leadership of Pawel Kalinski, MD, PhD, involving modulation of key proteins known as chemokines.

## **New Immunotherapy Platform, Role of Stress in Cancer Highlight Roswell Park's AACR 2022 Presentations**

Dozens of cancer specialists at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center have been invited to present their latest advances in cancer research at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), which will take place in New Orleans, Louisiana, from April 8 to 13.

Grace Dy, MD, Chief of Thoracic Oncology in the Department of Medicine, will give a podium presentation reporting long-term outcomes in a study investigating the effectiveness of sotorasib, a drug that targets mutations of the KRAS gene, in patients with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

Irwin Gelman, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Oncology in the Department of Cancer Genetics and Genomics, will present the results of his research into the role of a protein, HBP1, and drugs that target this protein, in controlling breast cancer dormancy reawakening.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**

### **Over 4,500 toys collected for our community**

Thank you all for your support of our third Roswell Park Community Holiday Toy Drive! Together, our employees, patients and partners have collected more than 4,500 toys for children in need throughout our community. More than 30 pallets were used to load up the toys and deliver to agencies and centers across Western New York, reaching both urban and rural communities!

A special thank you to the Buffalo Fire Department who again eagerly signed on to assist in this effort.

Thanks to each of you who has helped make sure we are reaching and helping to bring joy to as many families as possible this year! Happy Holidays!

### **Cruisin' for a Cure on September 24**

Roswell Park is pleased to once again welcome MANUP Buffalo for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Cruisin' for a Cure event Saturday, September 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The full-day, family-friendly event includes a car show featuring classic cars, trucks, motorcycles and other vehicles as well as a free prostate cancer early detection and education clinic conducted by Roswell Park experts.

There will be prizes for the cars, a DJ and food for everyone to enjoy and much more. Additional information is available [here](#), or call MANUP Buffalo co-founder Richard Satterwhite at ext. 1609.

### **Colorectal cancer screening navigation for employees**

Our colorectal clinical and screening teams are launching the **Employee Colorectal Screening Navigation Program**. This program enables employees to work with a Roswell Park screening navigator, in collaboration with your primary care provider, to get screened for colorectal cancer. Depending on your needs and preferences, our navigation team will connect you with gastroenterology services in our community, or to get screened for colorectal cancer here at Roswell Park.

Learn if you meet the criteria for screening by calling 716-845-4080 or email [colorectalscreening@roswellpark.org](mailto:colorectalscreening@roswellpark.org).

### **Back to Health campaign**

Each day and for the past two years, we have adjusted to challenges brought on by a global pandemic, but never faltered from our mission — giving our patients the best-quality care. As life begins to open back up, we want to assure our community that we have and will always be here to help get their health back on track with our new [Back to Health campaign](#).

Nearly 10 million cancer screenings did not happen in 2020 because of COVID-19, and we are starting to see the negative long-term impact of delayed cancer screenings. Today, there are developments that have significantly limited the risk of spreading COVID-19, and the virus no longer remains as large an obstacle as it once was. Through this campaign, help us encourage our community to make their health a priority — our physicians and staff are available to provide life-saving treatment.

### **Roswell Park, Sabres team up for prostate cancer early detection event**

One in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. But with early detection, 90% of these cancers can be cured. Roswell Park and the Buffalo Sabres are teaming up for a free prostate early detection event at KeyBank Center on Wednesday, May 11, from 3 to 7 p.m. Men 45 and over — and those 40 and over who are considered at [high risk](#) for developing the disease — are encouraged to sign up for the event for a chance to meet Sabres alumni, enter raffles and enjoy refreshments while taking this proactive step for their health.

Visit [Roswellpark.org/OneGoal](https://roswellpark.org/OneGoal) or call 1-800-Roswell to learn more and register yourself or a loved one today.

### **'The Journey to Broaden Our Understanding': Roswell Park 2022 Report Highlights Strength Through Unity**



Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the community around Buffalo — the City of Good Neighbors — was challenged in ways hard to fathom. Through some of the darkest hours, moments of love, acceptance, unity and kindness emerged. The dedicated team at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is sharing some of those moments through our third Community Annual Report.

Entitled “The Journey to Broaden Our Understanding: Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Our Community,” the report documents events, celebrations, community programs and a glimpse into life at Roswell Park throughout 212 pages.

### **Roswell Park and Partners Expand Life-Saving Lung Cancer Early Detection in High-Need Communities**

Faced with extremely low rates of lung cancer screening and poor access to early detection services in some communities, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center worked with state and local officials to tackle the challenge of reducing lung cancer’s impact on Western New York. The result of this collaboration is Eddy, or Early Detection Driven to You — lung cancer screening on wheels, implemented through novel outreach programs targeted to benefit underserved and high-risk communities.

Roswell Park’s Eddy outreach program, funded in part by an allocation from New York State, will bring state-of-the-art mobile lung screening directly to the communities and populations that can most benefit from lung screening due to higher risk for lung cancer and/or poor access to screening facilities — across the Western New York region, which includes Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties.

### **Nation’s Top Cancer Organizations Partner to Endorse Initiative to Increase Lung Cancer Screening in the U.S.**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Moffitt Cancer Center have partnered with more than 50 other cancer organizations to issue a call to action urging individuals, providers and insurers to increase access to and utilization of low-dose computed tomography (CT) scans for those at high risk for lung cancer. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual screening for people ages 50-80 who have smoked for at least 20 years. However, only 5.7% of eligible Americans were screened for lung cancer before the COVID-19 pandemic — compared to screening rates for breast, cervical and colon cancers that hover between 60% and 80%. And we know screening rates have decreased for all cancers due to the pandemic.

### **907 Michigan Building Will be ‘A True Home’ for Roswell Park Cancer Education and Outreach**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is proud to break ground on a new Community Outreach & Engagement Building at 907 Michigan Avenue in Buffalo. The project, which includes preservation of a home in Buffalo’s historic Fruit Belt neighborhood, will be the new home for the cancer center’s extensive Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) team.



Located adjacent to the Roswell Park campus, the half-acre site is part of the Fruit Belt neighborhood and African American Heritage Corridor. New York State Governor Kathy Hochul as well as the State Senate and Assembly worked to secure funding for this project in their budgets with several community stakeholders playing an important role in the preservation, design elements and function of the building.

### **Roswell Park, Buffalo Black Nurses to Host Job Fair at the Cancer Center**

If you've considered a career in cancer care or oncology nursing, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center alongside Buffalo Black Nurses are hosting a job fair on Saturday, September 17.

New graduates as well as experienced nurses are welcome to attend the event. Learn about the world of oncology nursing and potentially take part in on-site interviews. Recruiters will also be on hand for non-nursing positions that are open on the Roswell Park careers [website](#). Register to attend [here](#).

### **Roswell Park Expands Educational Offerings With New Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo Prep Collaborations**

When Dr. Roswell Park established the first center in the United States dedicated solely to the study of cancer, he enlisted some of the best and brightest minds from across the globe. Today, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center continues to be a world-class destination for scientists and oncologists — not only as a career home, but as a place to learn about cancer science and clinical practice. Through two new collaborative summer programs, the cancer center is now expanding its engagement with young learners.

Joining Roswell Park's summertime educational offerings are new programs for high-school students attending Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) as well as middle-school learners participating in the Buffalo Prep program.

### **Roswell Park CARES Program Enables New Programs in Seneca-Babcock and Fruit Belt Communities**

Two local organizations dedicated to serving others — the [Seneca-Babcock Community Association](#) and [Buffalo Adult & Teen Challenge](#) — have expanded their programming and culinary offerings following two major projects supported by a grant from the [CARES Program](#) at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The CARES (Community Alliance to Reach, Empower and Sustain) Program works to strengthen the bond between the City of Good Neighbors and the cancer center. Each year, CARES assists with several capital improvements at nonprofits across the region. Completed projects include a 2,000-square-foot computer center, exterior landscaping and a stage renovation. Additional initiatives include neighborhood cleanups, blood drives, cancer screenings and resume-writing workshops.

### **Roswell Park, Trocaire College Partner To Launch Roswell Scholars Program**

To improve career pathways for students in the health sciences, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Trocaire College have partnered to launch the Roswell Scholars program.

Beginning Fall 2022, 10 Trocaire students will be accepted into the program annually to work onsite at the Buffalo-based cancer center with Roswell Park staff to learn about potential career paths with the goal of being hired upon completion of their degree. Roswell Park will provide mentors and shadow days, as well as professional development seminars to these students on an annual basis.

### **PhD Students & Fellows invited to join Twitter Spaces Chat May 26**

Join Roswell Park scientists Joyce Ohm, PhD, interim Chair of Cancer Genetics and Genomics, and Michael Feigin, PhD, Assistant Professor of Oncology, as they share guidance to young scientists looking for their research mentors. What qualities should you look for in a mentor? What can students do to get the most out of their relationships? And what do mentors look for in a student? **We will be discussing these topics and more Thursday, May 26 at 3 p.m.**

**@RoswellPark's Twitter Spaces.**

### **Roswell Park continues to give back**

Members of our Human Resource team donated \$1,600 to the Buffalo F.A.T.H.E.R.S group to honor the memory of Deacon Heyward Patterson, who was among the 10 who lost his life in the tragic Tops Market shooting last month and is the uncle to one of our HR team members. The donations will help provide help and resources to community members in need.

### **Roswell Park hosts community drive**

Roswell Park has coordinated a community drive in partnership with the Resource Council of WNY Inc. May 18-23 to collect in-demand food and personal/childcare supplies for families most closely affected by the May 14 Tops tragedy and closure of the Jefferson Avenue Tops location.

### **Buffalo Fire Department, Roswell Park Partnering to Mitigate Risks to City's First Responders**

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Cancer is the most dangerous threat to firefighter health and safety today, surpassing cardiac related deaths. To help address and reduce these risks, the Buffalo Fire Department and Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center have teamed up to develop an ongoing initiative to keep first responders safe.

Roswell Park, Buffalo Fire Department and Buffalo Professional Firefighters Local 282 have established a cancer prevention committee that meets regularly to keep these important issues at the forefront of the fire service, and have also collaborated to establish a three-pronged approach for reducing risks.

### **Preventative cancer screening presentation to Linde Inc.**

As part of our ongoing work to help inform large employers and their workforces about the importance of preventative cancer screenings, a team of our experts presented to the employees of Linde Inc. last week. Topics included mammography/breast cancer screening, prostate cancer screening, skin cancer screening and colorectal cancer screening.

Thank you to our presenters, Gyorgy Paragh, MD, PhD, Kathryn Glaser, PhD, Ermelinda Bonaccio, MD, and Eric Kauffman, MD, for sharing this important information with other Western New Yorkers.