

Fiscal Year 2024 Accomplishments  
(April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024)

**AWARDS AND GROWTH**

**Roswell Park Appoints Chief Medical Officer, Four New Chiefs Leading Key Clinical Programs**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center announced its latest slate of physician promotions, including naming [Julia Faller, DO](#), as Chief Medical Officer.

Most recently serving in the role of Chief of Perioperative Services, Dr. Faller joined Roswell Park in 2009. Additionally, [Aleodor “Doru” Andea, MD, MBA](#), previously with the University of Michigan — Ann Arbor, was named Chief of Dermatopathology and Director of Molecular Dermatopathology; [Kenan Onel, MD, PhD](#), was appointed Chief of Clinical Genomics and founding Director of the Center for Precision Oncology, recruited from Sema4, where he served as Senior Vice President of Translational Genetics; [Jenny Romero, MD](#), was appointed Chief of Head & Neck Medicine and General Medical Oncology; and [Zhongbo “Jerry” Yang, MD](#), on staff at Roswell Park since 2019, was promoted to Chief of Cytopathology, a branch of pathology that applies special tools and technology to examine cells closely in order to determine a diagnosis.

**Distinguished Roswell Park Researcher Named Fellow of The National Academy of Inventors**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center congratulates Director of Pharmaceutical Chemistry [Ravindra Pandey, PhD](#), for being named a National Academy of Inventors (NAI) Fellow.

Nationally recognized as one of “the highest distinctions awarded to academic inventors,” NAI Fellowship was newly awarded to 162 individuals who collectively hold more than 4,600 U.S. patents. The organization was founded to recognize such inventors and educate the public on how its members and their ideas benefit society.

**Roswell Park Thoracic Chair Earns National, Local Accolades**

In recognition of his dedication toward advancements in lung cancer care as well as his contributions as a valued mentor, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Chair of Thoracic Surgery, [Sai Yendamuri, MD, MBA, FACS](#), was honored with prestigious leadership roles, awards, and grant funding from both local and national organizations. Following a unanimous vote, Dr. Yendamuri was elected to the American Lung Association Local Leadership Board of Directors in Buffalo. The American Surgical Association and Society of Asian Academic Surgeons named Dr. Yendamuri the recipient of their 2023 Surgical Leaders Fellowship Grant, and the

Eastern Cardiothoracic Surgical Society presented him with a Presidential Service Award following his time as Chair on the Career Development Committee.

### **Roswell Park Welcomes New Chief Digital & Information Officer**

Following a national search, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has selected [George T. “Buddy” Hickman](#) as its new Chief Digital & Information Officer. Hickman succeeds Tom Furlani, PhD, who retired in January 2024.

Hickman comes to Roswell Park with 30 years of experience in healthcare senior leadership. He was most recently with First Health Advisory, where he served as Chief Strategy Officer. Previously, Hickman has held Chief Information Officer roles with health systems across the United States. As CDIO, Hickman will lead a team of Roswell Park information technology experts to craft both IT and digital health solutions to benefit patients, clinicians, researchers and business operations.

### **Buffalo Spree Names 136 Roswell Park Physicians as Top Doctors**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center honored the 136 physicians across 34 specialties named to Buffalo Spree magazine’s Top Doctors list for 2024. The annual list is compiled through surveys submitted by Western New York physicians.

### **Roswell Park Pediatrics Chair Recognized for Efforts to Advance Care for Young People With Blood Cancers**

In recognition of the countless hours she has dedicated to designing and leading practice-changing research and advocating for higher standards of care for children and young adults with cancer, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Chair of Pediatrics [Kara Kelly, MD](#), was honored with both awards and new leadership positions by several national and international oncology organizations.

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), an alliance of leading cancer centers including Roswell Park, named Dr. Kelly Chair of its Pediatric Hodgkin Lymphoma Panel. And Dr. Kelly was recognized with two awards: She accepted the Distinguished Leadership Award at the Lymphoma Research Foundation’s 2023 Annual Gala in New York City, and was recognized with a special achievement award during the International Symposium for Childhood, Adolescent and Young Adult Hodgkin Lymphoma.

### **St. Joseph's Health Launches Cancer Care Service Line in Partnership with Roswell Park**

St. Joseph’s Health announced the launch of a groundbreaking Cancer Care service line, bringing exceptional oncology services to Central New York. With medical oncology provided in collaboration with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, NY, this initiative reinforces the commitment to providing personalized, patient-centric cancer care close to home.

## **Experts in Transplantation, Engineered Cells and Pediatrics Join Growing Roswell Park Cell Therapy Program**

Three physician-scientists who have relocated to Buffalo, New York, to join Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center will apply highly specialized transplantation and cell therapy (TCT) expertise to both patient care and the development of New York State's first cell therapy manufacturing and research hub. [Brian Betts, MD](#), joined Roswell Park as Vice Chair of Strategic Initiatives within the Transplant & Cellular Therapy Section, Department of Medicine; [Kanwaldeep Mallhi, MD](#), was named Associate Professor of Oncology and Clinical Director of Pediatric Transplantation and Cellular Therapy in the Department of Pediatrics; and [Shernan Holtan, MD](#), joined the Roswell Park faculty in February as Chief of Blood and Marrow Transplant in the Department of Medicine.

## **Roswell Park Will Lead \$13.5M Effort to Understand Racial Disparities in Response to Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors**

Three competitive National Cancer Institute (NCI) grants totaling \$13.5 million will support the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center team leading a multi-institutional effort aimed at improving the potential of immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) — a promising and relatively new type of cancer immunotherapy credited with bringing about the largest decline in cancer deaths in a single year, from 2016-2017. Working in close collaboration with experts from the University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute and Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research, a team led by [Song Yao, MD, PhD](#), Vice Chair and Professor of Oncology in the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control at Roswell Park will expand on work to understand differences in how cancer patients of different races may respond to common immunotherapies.

## **Cheektowaga Office of Dermatologist Marcelle Grassi, MD, Joins Roswell Park Care Network**

Offering access to comprehensive dermatology and treatment of benign disease, the Roswell Park Care Network welcomed physician and longtime faculty member [Marcelle Grassi, MD](#), and her Cheektowaga practice at 2560 Walden Avenue, Cheektowaga.

## **Roswell Park Retains Prestigious National Accreditation from The Commission on Cancer**

The Commission on Cancer (CoC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons, fully reaccredited Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center for three years. The Commission on Cancer gives recognition to cancer centers that provide multidisciplinary, patient-centered cancer care. Roswell Park is one of the longest-standing CoC programs, having maintained accreditation from the organization continuously since 1931.

## **Governor Hochul Announces New York's First Cell and Gene Therapy Hub at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo**

Governor Kathy Hochul announced that New York's first cell and gene therapy hub will be housed at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Empire State Development will invest \$30 million to assist in expanding the current cell and gene therapy research capacity at Roswell's Therapeutic Cell Production Facility from six to 20 specialized clean rooms, making it the largest academic cell and gene therapy research and manufacturing facility in the United States. The center will help to support the research and development of life-saving therapies at Roswell, significantly grow its well-established research capabilities, and establish Roswell as one of the premier cell therapy discovery and production institutions in the nation and catalyze the growth of the cell and gene therapy sector in Western NY. The expansion also realizes Governor Hochul's 2023 State of the State commitment to establish an Upstate cell and gene therapy hub and bolster the state's leadership in the fast-growing life science sector.

### **Growing Roswell Park Program Evolves Into New Department of Indigenous Cancer Health**

A program launched at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center three years ago to advance health equity and access by strengthening connections between cancer researchers and Indigenous communities has grown into a broad-based team of Indigenous experts with an expanded scope and purpose. The cancer center's new Department of Indigenous Cancer Health reflects the significant growth of an initiative led since its inception by health disparities expert [Rodney Haring, PhD, MSW](#), an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, Beaver Clan.

### **Lockport Practice Opens as Newest Roswell Park Care Network Site**

Opening the doors to specialized cancer and dermatology services to patients in Niagara County and beyond, the Roswell Park Care Network announced its newest practice in Lockport. The Brocton Drive location will offer general dermatology plus surgical oncology and breast surgery consultations, treatment, and follow-up care with additional services added in the coming months. In addition to these services, patients will also be able to consult Care Network experts on [Mohs surgery](#) – a precise, surgical technique that removes thin layers of cancer-containing skin without disrupting healthy tissue.

### **Roswell Park's Kimberly Sweeney Named Vice President of Patient Care Experience**

A shining beacon of care, warmth and hope to the patients and families who encounter her, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Kimberly Sweeney, MBA, RN, was appointed Vice President of Patient Care Experience.

### **Roswell Park Scott Bieler Amherst Center Defines Vision for Community Cancer Care**

Eighteen months after Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center announced a plan to build a new freestanding location in Amherst, N.Y., the cancer center welcomed patients, cancer survivors and community members into that center — [Roswell Park Scott Bieler Amherst](#)

[Center](#) — for the first time at a grand-opening event. The 30,000-sq.-ft. site extends convenient access to outstanding cancer care and services for patients in Buffalo’s northern suburbs.

### **Forbes Names Roswell Park one of Best Employers in New York**

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

Ranking at number 3 on Forbes’ list of top New York State employers, Roswell Park is the only Western New York healthcare center to be named to Forbes’ 2023 list of the best New York State employers.

### **Biotech Executive Returns to Roswell Park to Lead Expansion of Cell Therapy Production and Grow Industry Partnerships**

As work advances on a significant expansion of its cellular therapy production and research facilities, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has named [Yeong “Christopher” Choi, PhD, MBA](#), as Senior Vice President of Industry Partnerships and Technical Director of the center’s current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) Facility.

Dr. Choi returns to Western New York after a 5-year tenure in the biotech industry that included executive leadership roles at CRISPR Therapeutics as well as Kite Pharma/Gilead.

### **Roswell Park Care Network Expands in Northern Erie, Niagara Counties**

The Roswell Park Care Network, a dynamic alliance of medical providers committed to delivering exceptional care to patients across Western New York and beyond, announced new locations, care providers and services as part of ongoing growth and expansion.

The Care Network, established in 2019 to expand convenient access to cancer treatment and services guided by experts at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, announced the addition of comprehensive urologic care at its newest location in Williamsville, NY. Located at 2150 Wehrle Drive, this practice will be led by [John L. DeBerry, III, MD](#), a general urology specialist who has been practicing in the region for more than three decades.

Additionally, the Roswell Park Care Network Niagara Falls practice relocated to newly renovated space at 10175 Niagara Falls Blvd., bringing together specialized cancer and general urology services under one roof. Faculty physicians [Ahmed Aly Hussein Aly, MD](#), and [Muammer Altok, MD](#), provide full-service care, diagnosis and treatment of all urologic cancers (adrenal, bladder, kidney, penile, prostate, testicular and urethral) as well as general urologic disorders. Also available onsite is high-quality care for patients with lung cancers and other malignant chest conditions as well as lung cancer screening, under the care of [Elisabeth Dexter, MD, FACS](#), and [Lori Pearce, PA](#).

And joining the staff at Roswell Park Hematology Oncology Southtowns was Thomas Schwaab, MD, PhD, who also provides care at Roswell Park's main campus.

### **Roswell Park's Dr. Anurag Singh Named Fellow of the American Society for Radiation Oncology**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Director of Radiation Research [Anurag Singh, MD](#), was named a 2023 American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) Fellow. ASTRO is the world's largest society for radiation oncology professionals. Dr. Singh received his FASTRO designation at the Society's 65th Annual Meeting in San Diego, California.

### **Newsweek Names Roswell Park Among America's Best Cancer Hospitals**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center was named to the ranks of America's Best Cancer Hospitals for 2023. It is the only Buffalo-area center included on the full list of 175 cancer hospitals across the country. Working with global research firm Statista, Newsweek compiled the rankings based on a nationwide online survey of hospital managers and health care professionals, as well as hospital quality metrics and data on patient experience.

### **Andrew Storer, PhD, DNP, Named Roswell Park Chief Nursing Officer**

Following a national search, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center promoted [Andrew Storer, PhD, DNP, RN, NP-C, FAANP](#), to Chief Nursing Officer, Senior Vice President for Patient Care Services and Associate Professor of Oncology.

On staff at Roswell Park since 2020, Dr. Storer takes on the CNO role following the retirement of longtime nurse leader Mary Ann Long, MS, RN. As Chief Nursing Officer, Dr. Storer will focus on leading all nursing teams at the center and evaluate services across inpatient, outpatient and community practices.

### **Roswell Park CEO Dr. Candace Johnson Names Diversity and Inclusion Leader Crystal Rodriguez-Dabney as Senior VP**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center appointed Crystal Rodriguez-Dabney, Esq., as Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Vice President — a senior leadership position with direct influence on initiatives across the organization. The appointment caps a national search that began more than a year ago and comes at a juncture of great positive momentum in Roswell Park's ongoing efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and access within the cancer center and throughout the communities it serves.

### **Prominent Attorney and Public Policy Expert Leecia Eve Named Chair of Roswell Park Board**

Nationally prominent attorney Leecia Eve, Esq., was named Chair of the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Board of Directors. A Buffalo native, she was named to the post

by New York Governor Kathy Hochul, becoming the first woman and the first person of color to serve as Board Chair.

### **Dr. Candace Johnson Named to Becker's 'Women Hospital Presidents and CEOs to Know' List**

Becker's Hospital Review, a leading healthcare industry news source, has [recognized](#) Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center President [Candace S. Johnson, PhD](#), among its "177 Women Hospital Presidents and CEOs to Know," noting her accomplishments as a pioneer in her field and a passionate advocate for emerging leaders. Dr. Johnson has been pivotal in expanding Roswell Park's programs in immunotherapy, cellular therapies and community engagement and has steered the organization through significant growth in staff and patients served.

### **Roswell Park Names New Leaders to Oversee Key Areas of Education, Facilities and Research**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center announced the promotion and appointment of three leaders to executive roles overseeing key aspects of research, education and facilities management: **Ericka Bennett, Esq.**, was promoted to Vice President of Corporate Ethics, Research Integrity and Research Subject Protection; **Petrina Hill-Cheatom, MEd**, was named Roswell Park's Deputy Chief Academic Officer and Vice President for Educational Affairs; and **Anthony Putrelo, PE**, was named Vice President of Facilities Management.

## **CLINICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Advanced Noninvasive, Nonsurgical Prostate Cancer Treatment Now Available at Roswell Park**

For individuals living with early-stage prostate cancer, experts at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center now offer an advanced, safe and painless option to treat the disease. The Buffalo-based cancer center is the only provider in Western New York to offer high-intensity focused ultrasound, also known as [HIFU](#).

HIFU is a form of focal therapy, a treatment that targets the cancer within the prostate gland. After scanning the prostate and constructing a three-dimensional model, a urologist uses highly targeted ultrasound waves to ablate, or destroy, cancer cells in the prostate. The procedure is an outpatient treatment performed under general anesthesia. Roswell Park prostate cancer experts say for patients who are good candidates for this treatment option, HIFU is noninvasive, carries a low risk of side effects and allows for quick recovery.

### **Roswell Park Expands Lung Cancer Early Detection Utilizing AI Software on Eddy**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is intensifying its efforts to increase lung cancer early detection in the greater Buffalo, New York, area by partnering with Denver-based Eon to

leverage the health-tech company's proprietary artificial intelligence patient management software.

### **Amtagvi, First FDA-Approved Cell Therapy for Solid-Tumor Cancers, Available at Roswell Park**

Expanding access to a breakthrough treatment option for patients with metastatic melanoma, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center was approved to administer the newly FDA-approved tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapy Amtagvi. This "living drug" cell therapy is manufactured by Iovance Biotherapeutics.

Amtagvi, also known as lifileucel, is a form of adoptive cell therapy that uses a patient's own cells to treat cancer. TIL therapy takes T cells from the patient's tumor, activates and multiplies them into billions of cells in a lab, and returns the T cells to the patient. While similar to other cellular therapies such as stem cell/bone marrow transplant or chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy, TIL therapy is the first cell therapy approved to treat solid-tumor cancers.

### **Roswell Park Study First to Show Two-Drug Combination Selectively Targets p53-Mutant Cancers**

A preclinical study led by a team of researchers at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center led by [Christos Fountzilas, MD, FACP](#), Co-Leader of the Gastrointestinal Disease Team and Associate Director for Solid Tumors, and [Andrei V. Bakin, PhD](#), Associate Professor of Oncology, Department of Cancer Genetics and Genomics, highlights the potential of a novel two-drug treatment strategy targeting p53-mutant cancers. The findings, [recently published](#) in *Cell Reports Medicine*, lay the groundwork for further research, including a phase 1 clinical trial of colon cancer patients that is currently underway.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Highlight Potential Impacts of Eliminating Menthol Cigarette Sales in Buffalo**

Researchers from the Health Behavior Department at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center have [released a report](#) showing the potential impacts of eliminating the sale of menthol cigarettes in the City of Buffalo. Their analysis was uncovered from data sources including the New York State Cancer Registry, the United State Census Bureau and other recent research on the impact of menthol cigarette bans. "Eliminating the sale of menthol cigarettes will save hundreds of lives in our city, particularly among Black people, who smoke menthol cigarettes at a far higher rate than other people who smoke," said [Andrew Hyland, PhD](#), Chair of the Health Behavior Department at Roswell Park and Director of the New York State Smokers' Quitline.

### **Roswell Park Experts Present Latest Discoveries in Stem Cell Transplantation, Cellular Therapy**

The Chief of Myeloma at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center delivered the latest findings of the [CARTITUDE-2 clinical trial](#) at the 2024 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 San Antonio, Texas.

[Jens Hillengass, MD, PhD](#), who also serves as Vice Chair for Research at Roswell Park, presented a podium talk highlighting updated data from the phase 2 trial (NCT04133636), which demonstrated that a single infusion of the CAR T-cell therapy ciltacabtagene autoleucel (cilta-cel; brand name Carvykti) resulted in deep, durable responses in multiple myeloma patients whose disease had progressed less than a year after autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT) or who experienced relapse after receiving up to three lines of initial therapy.

### **Novel Treatment Regimen for FLT3-Mutated Acute Myeloid Leukemia Shows Promise in Roswell Park-Led Study**

Up to 30% of patients newly diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) have an FLT3 gene mutation, which is associated with a high risk of relapse and a very poor prognosis. But clinical studies have shown that drugs called FLT3 inhibitors can extend long-term survival in these patients, especially when given in combination with other treatments. A phase 2 clinical trial led by Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center tested that strategy for treating FLT3-mutated AML, and the encouraging results are [newly reported in the \*Journal of Clinical Oncology\*](#), a journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. [Eunice Wang, MD](#), Chief of Leukemia/Benign Hematology at Roswell Park and principal investigator of the clinical trial, is first author of the study.

### **Roswell Park Study Defines Mechanisms Underlying Promising Precision Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer**

A research study led by a multidisciplinary team of scientists at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center details evidence on the therapeutic efficacy of a compound that targets a key genetic feature of pancreatic cancer. The work, [newly published in \*Cancer Research\*](#), a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research, illustrates potential clinical applications for the novel anticancer agent MRTX1133 and outlines its effect on both the tumor and the surrounding environment. [Vishnu Kumarasamy, PhD](#), is lead author on the new work.

### **Simple Blood Protein Tests Predict Which Lymphoma Patients Are Most Likely to Have Poor CAR T Outcomes**

As new cancer treatments become available, some of the most important ongoing research must look at ways to optimize those new approaches so that more patients can benefit from groundbreaking therapies. In work [newly published in \*Blood Cancer Discovery\*](#), a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research, a team of collaborators from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Moffitt Cancer Center report the first strategy for identifying *before treatment* which patients are at risk for poor outcomes from CAR T-cell therapy — pointing to opportunities to improve the safety and efficacy of this new and fast-

growing class of cancer immunotherapies. [Marco Davila, MD, PhD](#), Senior Vice President and Associate Director for Translational Research at Roswell Park, is co-leader of the study.

### **Subcutaneous Nivolumab as Effective as IV for Renal Cell Carcinoma — With Much Faster Treatment Time**

Subcutaneous injection of the immunotherapy nivolumab (brand name Opdivo) is noninferior to intravenous delivery and dramatically reduces treatment time in patients with renal cell carcinoma, as seen in the results of a large phase 3 clinical trial reported at the 2024 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Genitourinary Cancers Symposium in San Francisco, California. [Saby George, MD, FACP](#), Professor of Oncology and Medicine and Director of Network Clinical Trials at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, delivered an oral abstract summarizing the findings of “[A Study of Subcutaneous Nivolumab Versus Intravenous Nivolumab in Participants with Previously Treated Clear Cell Renal Carcinoma That Is Advanced or Has Spread \(CheckMate-67T\)](#)” (NCT04810078).

### **FL118, Drug Candidate Discovered at Roswell Park, Granted FDA Orphan Drug Status for Pancreatic Cancer**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has awarded Orphan Drug Designation to [Canget BioTekpharma LLC](#) for FL118, a drug candidate developed at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, as a possible treatment for pancreatic cancer.

FL118, also known by its chemical name, 10,11-methylenedioxy-20(S)-camptothecin (10,11-MD-CPT), is one of only 206 pharmaceutical agents granted Orphan Drug Designation for the treatment of pancreatic cancer since the FDA initiated the incentive program in 1984. Discovered by a team of scientists led by [Fengzhi Li, PhD](#), FL118 has been [shown in preclinical studies](#) to eliminate both pancreatic and colorectal tumor cells by binding to DDX5, a powerful cancer-causing protein.

### **Administered Earlier, Cilta-Cel CAR T Produces Deep, Durable Responses in Multiple Myeloma Patients**

A single infusion of the CAR T cell therapy ciltacabtagene autoleucel produced deep, durable responses in multiple myeloma patients whose disease had progressed less than a year after autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT) or who experienced relapse after receiving up to three lines of initial therapy, as seen in the latest follow-up data for two cohorts of participants in the phase 2 clinical trial CARTITUDE-2 ([NCT04133636](#), [ASH 2023 abstract 1021](#)). [Jens Hillengass, MD, PhD](#), Chief of Myeloma at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, shared the updated results in an oral abstract session during the American Society of Hematology (ASH) annual meeting in San Diego, California.

### **Nivolumab Associated With Higher Progression-Free Survival in Pediatric Advanced-Stage Hodgkin Lymphoma**

Replacing brentuximab vedotin with nivolumab in first-line treatment combined with the chemotherapy regimen AVD improved progression-free survival in pediatric patients with newly diagnosed, advanced-stage classic Hodgkin lymphoma (cHL), reported the authors of a phase 3 clinical trial sponsored by SWOG Cancer Research Network and presented by senior author [Kara Kelly, MD](#), Chair of Pediatric Oncology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, during the 2023 annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology in San Diego, California.

### **Roswell Park Researchers Document Worse Outcomes for Black Patients With Early-Stage Breast Cancer**

Black patients with early-stage breast cancer who have residual disease after neoadjuvant chemotherapy were more likely to die from the disease than white patients in the same cohort, reports a multidisciplinary team of researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Their findings, [newly published](#) in *JAMA Network Open*, highlight the importance of developing personalized treatment options for people of African descent who develop breast cancer.

Neoadjuvant chemotherapy (NACT) is given to try to shrink the tumor prior to surgery. The Roswell Park study shows that preoperative chemosensitivity — the tumor’s vulnerability to therapy — varies among people of different races and ethnicities. It is usually categorized as very sensitive, sensitive, or refractory — unresponsive to treatment. The work was led by [Shipra Gandhi, MD](#), and [Arya Mariam Roy, MBBS](#).

### **Study Compiling Outcomes of 17,000 Cancer Patients Highlights Need for Careful Treatment Planning, Monitoring**

Data from a multi-institutional research effort shed light on opportunities to improve the safety of adding immunotherapy to conventional curative therapies, underscoring the importance of close monitoring and multidisciplinary management. Led by a Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center fellow, Yu Fujiwara, MD, the work, [newly published](#) in *The Lancet Oncology*, demonstrates that the addition of immune checkpoint inhibition (ICI) to perioperative therapy was associated with increased treatment-related adverse events as well as an increasing trend of fatal toxicity.

### **Novel Immunotherapy Approach at Roswell Park Shows Promise in Metastatic Triple-Negative Breast Cancer**

A phase 1 clinical trial conducted exclusively at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center shows that a novel treatment regimen can make immunotherapy more effective in patients with metastatic triple-negative breast cancer (mTNBC). Results of the study are reported in “Systemic Infusion of TLR3-Ligand and IFN $\alpha$  in Breast Cancer Patients Reprograms Local Tumor Microenvironment for Selective CTL Influx,” [published](#) in *The Journal for ImmunoTherapy of Cancer*. Principal investigator and first author [Shipra Gandhi, MD](#), of the Department of

Medicine at Roswell Park, led the study under the scientific leadership of [Pawel Kalinski, MD, PhD](#), senior author.

### **'Dark Genome' May Hold Key to Early Detection of 'Silent Killer' Cancers**

Research led by Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Genome Protection Inc. has detected activity in the “dark genome” that could help transform the diagnosis and treatment of five of the 10 most deadly cancers in the U.S.

Lung, pancreatic, ovarian, liver and esophageal cancer — which collectively claim more than 235,000 lives annually — are often called “silent killers” because typically they’re not diagnosed until symptoms appear in the late stages, when a cure is unlikely. The research team — co-led by [Andrei Gudkov, PhD, DSci](#), Senior Vice President, Research Technology and Innovation and the Garman Family Chair in Cell Stress Biology at Roswell Park — discovered that the immune system begins to mount an attack against these cancers even when they have advanced only to stage 1 or stage 2, producing antibodies that can be detected with an immunoassay when the disease is at a more treatable stage.

### **Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Generate:Biomedicines Enter Into Collaboration Agreement to Accelerate Novel Cell Therapies For Oncology Using Generative AI**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Generate:Biomedicines announced a strategic collaboration to discover and develop chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies, and armoring technologies, for up to three oncology targets, including in ovarian cancer and other solid tumors. In ovarian cancer alone, an [estimated](#) 314,000 women worldwide are diagnosed and over 200,000 women die each year.

### **Roswell Park Licenses Rapid, Comprehensive Blood Test to Agilent, a Global Leader in the Life Sciences Market**

An advanced, high-speed blood cancer test developed at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has been licensed for commercial development by Agilent Technologies Inc., a global leader in life sciences, diagnostics and applied markets. PanHeme, an assay used to support the clinical care of patients with blood cancers, including leukemias, lymphomas and myeloma, is a next-generation-sequencing (NGS) technology that can identify mutations in hundreds of genes in under 72 hours — a dramatic improvement over the three- to four-week wait time for the current leading NGS molecular test.

[Carl Morrison, MD, DVM](#), Senior Vice President of Scientific Development and Integrative Medicine and Chair of the Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, developed, created and activated the PanHeme assay with [Sean Glenn, PhD](#), Vice Chair of Molecular Pathology.

### **Roswell Park Cancer Innovation SurVaxM Granted FDA Fast Track Designation**

A promising cancer innovation developed at Roswell Park has been granted Fast Track Designation (FTD) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The designation awarded to [MimiVax Inc.](#) provides more extensive and accelerated access to FDA resources for the company's development of the novel cancer immunotherapy [SurVaxM](#), which is now in late-stage trials around the country. SurVaxM was developed at Roswell Park by [Robert Fenstermaker, MD](#), Chair of Neurosurgery, and [Michael Ciesielski, PhD](#), Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery. Work to develop the vaccine was enabled by donations from numerous individuals and corporations to the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation, including support for events like the Ride for Roswell.

### **Mucositis After Head/Neck Cancer Treatment More Prevalent Than Previously Known, Roswell Park Study Shows**

While most patients treated with radiation therapy for cancers of the head and neck develop oral mucositis, there is no standard approach for monitoring those patients for this often-debilitating side effect of cancer treatment or for measuring its severity. In new work [published](#) by *JAMA Network Open*, a research team led by Roswell Park's [Anurag Singh, MD](#), and [Austin Iovoli, MD](#), shows that more patients than previously thought experience mucositis and can benefit from earlier diagnosis and intervention to address its effects.

### **Roswell Park Team Reports New Insights on Treatment of Metastatic Breast Cancer**

Initial results from an in-progress Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center clinical trial offer important insights into hormone receptor-positive and HER2-negative (HR+/HER2-) metastatic breast cancer and patient response to CDK4/6 inhibitors. This study, [newly published](#) in *NPJ Precision Oncology*, identifies pathological and biological features associated with therapeutic response in these patients — suggesting possible treatment strategies for this common breast cancer subtype. The work was led by [Agnieszka Witkiewicz, MD](#), Professor of Oncology, in collaboration with colleagues including [Ellis Levine, MD](#), Chief of Breast Medicine, and [Erik Knudsen, PhD](#), Chair of Molecular and Cellular Biology.

### **Lorazepam Treatment May Be Linked to Worse Outcomes for Pancreatic Cancer Patients**

Patients with pancreatic cancer who took the benzodiazepine lorazepam (Ativan), commonly prescribed to treat anxiety during cancer treatment, had a shorter progression-free survival than patients who did not, according to results published in [Clinical Cancer Research](#), a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR).

In contrast, patients who took the benzodiazepine alprazolam (Xanax) had a significantly longer progression-free survival than patients who did not. [Michael Feigin, PhD](#), an associate professor of pharmacology and therapeutics at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, is senior author of the study.

### **New Approach to Adoptive T-Cell Therapy Shows Promise for Boosting Immune Response in Ovarian Cancer**

Researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center report that a new approach to immunotherapy could overcome some of the challenges of treating ovarian cancer by leveraging the power of endogenous (host) T cells using engineered T cells to deliver bispecific T-cell engagers, commonly referred to as BiTEs — a trademarked term for a type of fusion protein. The research team, led by [A. J. Robert McGray, PhD](#), and [Emese Zsiros, MD, PhD, FACOG](#), believes this strategy could improve treatment outcomes in ovarian cancer, for which immunotherapy has been largely ineffective. Findings from their preclinical study lay the groundwork for a new approach to targeting folate receptor alpha (FR $\alpha$ ), an antigen commonly present in epithelial ovarian cancer and associated with advanced disease, chemotherapy resistance and disease relapse.

### **Overweight BMI Linked to Better Outcomes in Patients with Head & Neck Cancer**

Researchers at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center are shedding light on how [Body Mass Index](#) (BMI) impacts treatment response, risk of recurrence and survival in patients with head and neck cancer. Their retrospective study, published in *JAMA Network Open*, found that head and neck cancer patients with an overweight BMI had better outcomes than those with a normal or obese BMI, including longer overall and progression-free survival and lower rates of locoregional failure — persistent or recurrent disease around the tumor site and in nearby lymph nodes. [Anurag Singh, MD](#), Director of Radiation Research, was principal investigator of the study.

### **New CAR T-Cell Strategy Highly Effective Against Small Cell Lung Cancer in Preclinical Study**

A new approach to chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR T) therapy has shown great promise against small cell lung cancer (SCLC) in a preclinical study. The findings cover new ground in our understanding of how CAR T can be employed against solid-tumor cancers, and provide support for further studies in cancer patients.

[Renier Brentjens, MD, PhD](#), Deputy Director and the Katherine Anne Gioia Endowed Chair in Cancer Medicine at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, served as principal investigator of the study, “IL-18-secreting CAR T cells targeting DLL3 are highly effective in small cell lung cancer models,” recently [published](#) in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*. The research was a collaborative effort with researchers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the Weill Cornell School of Medicine.

### **FTD/TPI Plus Oxaliplatin Well-Tolerated but not Broadly Effective as Treatment for Esophageal Cancer**

A recent research effort led by [Sarbjit Mukherjee, MD, MS](#), Assistant Professor of Oncology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, demonstrated that a new chemotherapy combination — trifluridine/tipiracil (FTD/TPI) and oxaliplatin — is well tolerated and has activity among patients with esophageal cancer. Findings from this late-breaking phase 2 clinical study

was presented during the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting, which continues through April 19 in Orlando, Florida.

### **Roswell Park Team Assesses Addition of Complement Inhibitor Drug to Immunotherapy for Ovarian Cancer**

Researchers at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center have launched a phase 2 clinical trial that they hope will improve both survival and quality of life for patients with recurrent ovarian, fallopian-tube or primary peritoneal cancer and malignant effusion, a side effect of the disease that significantly impairs quality of life. The study, led by [Emese Zsiros, MD, PhD, FACOG](#), and [Brahm Segal, MD](#), is exclusive to Roswell Park, where it was developed.

The clinical trial will evaluate the safety and effectiveness of pegcetacoplan (APL-2) as a treatment for these patients. The Food & Drug Administration has already approved the drug, a complement inhibitor, for the treatment of the rare blood disease paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, but this marks the first time it has been evaluated for the treatment of cancer.

### **Roswell Park-Led Team Creates TILs-Based Scoring Tool That Correlates with Breast Cancer Survival**

A team at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has uncovered a link between survival and the number of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) in the tumors of breast cancer patients. [Kazuaki Takabe, MD, PhD, FACS](#), Clinical Chief of Breast Surgery, Breast Program Leader and Breast Disease Site Leader at Roswell Park, served as principal investigator of the new study [published](#) in *Annals of Surgery*. Rongrong Wu, MD, and Masanori Oshi, MD, of the Department of Surgical Oncology at Roswell Park were first authors of the study, which was completed in collaboration with colleagues in Japan.

### **Roswell Park Study May Provide Clues to Treating Colorectal Cancer More Effectively in Younger Patients**

While the incidence of colorectal cancer (CRC) has dropped significantly among older adults in recent years — a trend attributed to regular screening colonoscopies and lower smoking rates — the opposite is true for people born between 1981 and 1996, who have double the risk compared with people born in 1950. There's an urgent need to identify more-effective therapies for those younger people: Approximately 58% of patients age 50 or under have advanced, distant disease at the time of diagnosis, and only 14% of that group will survive five years.

A novel study led by medical oncologists [Deepak Vadehra, DO](#), and [Sarbjit Mukherjee, MD, MS](#), of the Gastrointestinal Center at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center sheds light on factors that may affect treatment response in younger people with CRC. That information could guide the development of new treatments for younger patients, who typically have poorer outcomes.

## **Roswell Park Study is First to Show That Exercise Strengthens Immune System in Multiple Myeloma Patients**

Research has shown that the immune system doesn't function properly in patients with multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that occurs when plasma cells — a type of white blood cell — multiply out of control. But a clinical trial led by [Jens Hillengass, MD, PhD](#), Chief of Myeloma at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, shows that exercise may have the power to strengthen the immune system in those patients, providing a nonpharmaceutical method of helping control the disease.

## **Race and Ethnicity Affect 21-Gene Recurrence Score, Overall Survival in Women with ER+ Breast Cancer**

An observational cohort study out of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center demonstrates that race and ethnicity affect a woman's 21-gene recurrence score, a tool used to determine risk of recurrence and distant metastasis in patients with early-stage, hormone-receptor-positive breast cancer. Based on the expression of 21 cancer-related genes detected in pre-treatment tumor specimens, recurrence score is used routinely in clinical care to identify patients who might benefit from chemotherapy as part of their treatment plan. Scores range from 0-100, with a score of 26 or higher indicating greater risk of recurrence and poorer overall survival. [Anurag Singh, MD](#), Director of Radiation Research and Co-Leader of the Cancer Stress Biology Program at Roswell Park, served as principal investigator.

## **Roswell Park Oncologists and Scientists Bring Latest Research Findings to ASCO 2023**

Oncologists, epidemiologists and basic, translational and clinical researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center have been invited to present their own research surrounding cancer management, ongoing clinical trials and more at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Research (ASCO), happening online and in-person from McCormick Place in Chicago, Illinois, June 2 to 6. The Roswell Park-led studies to be featured during ASCO 2023 include podium presentations highlighting clinical studies in patients with colorectal cancer and breast cancer, as well as a poster abstract highlighting new research on the impact of physical activity in patients with multiple myeloma.

## **Study: Healthy Lifestyle Reduces Risk of Recurrence and Death in High-Risk Breast Cancer Patients**

High-risk breast cancer patients who most closely followed cancer-prevention guidelines published by the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) and American Cancer Society (ACS) before, during and after chemotherapy experienced a 37% reduced risk of disease recurrence and a 58% reduced risk of death, shows a study led by Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Researchers hope the information can be used to educate patients about ways they might improve their own outcomes even after diagnosis. [Rikki Cannioto, PhD, EdD, MS](#), of the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control at Roswell Park, was first author of

“Adherence to cancer prevention lifestyle recommendations before, during, and 2 years after treatment for high-risk breast cancer: Associations with disease recurrence and mortality.”

### **Roswell Park Nurses Share Their Innovative Practices at Oncology Nursing Society Annual Congress**

Evidence-based practice changes led by nurses from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center will be highlighted – and a longtime Roswell Park nurse recognized – at the 48th annual Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Congress April 26-30, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas.

Hector Tirado, BSN, AAS, CPhT, presented “Standardized Transplant and Cellular Therapy Patient Education Upon Admission,” describing a new admissions protocol developed by nurses for inpatients in Roswell Park’s Transplant and Cellular Therapy (TCT) Center. The protocol centers on a checklist designed to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in every inpatient admission.

Also presenting during the meeting were Michael Martorana, BSN, BS, RN, who developed a proactive “SWAT” model of rounding at Roswell Park to ensure excellent care for patients receiving highly complex cancer treatments, and [Heather Huizinga, MSN, RN, OCN](#), who highlighted an independently designed screening process to identify patients who may benefit from palliative care.

### **Roswell Park Immunologists Identify Targetable Strategy for Reducing Solid-Tumor Cancer Metastasis**

Metastasis, or the spread of cancer from one site in the body to another, remains a leading cause of cancer-related deaths. Understanding how solid tumors spread is crucial to the effort to improve patient outcomes. A team of scientists led by [Scott Abrams, PhD](#), at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center uncovered a pathway associated with metastases to the lung, a common site for cancer spread. The work, [published](#) in the journal *JCI Insight*, has potentially significant implications that may point the way to new cancer therapies.

### **2-Year Follow-Up Shows Sotorasib Significantly Prolongs Survival in Patients With Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer**

Approximately one-third of patients with non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) who were treated with the targeted therapy sotorasib (brand name Lumakras) survived for at least two years after enrolling in a large clinical trial that evaluated the drug — significantly longer than what can be expected from patients treated with standard chemotherapy. The promising data from that clinical trial, called CodeBreak 100, are shared in “Long-term outcomes and molecular correlates of sotorasib efficacy in patients with pretreated KRAS G12C mutated non-small-cell lung cancer: a 2-year analysis of CodeBreak 100,” published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

“The two-year survival is a landmark observation,” said [Grace Dy, MD](#), Director of Thoracic Medicine Translational Research at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and first author of the paper.

### **Roswell Park Investigators Reveal Changes to Immune Status in Patient Tumors After Radiation**

Little is known about how radiation therapy to kill cancer cells affects immune cells and other components of patient tumors. But a study out of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is shedding light on that process, providing information that could be key for planning treatment regimens that combine immunotherapy and radiation therapy. The authors outline their findings in [a new study](#) in the *Journal for ImmunoTherapy of Cancer*. The work was led by [Jason Muhitch, PhD](#), Professor of Oncology in the Roswell Park Department of Immunology.

### **New CAR T-Cell Strategy Highly Effective Against Small Cell Lung Cancer in Preclinical Study**

A new approach to chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR T) therapy has shown great promise against small cell lung cancer (SCLC) in a preclinical study. The findings cover new ground in our understanding of how CAR T can be employed against solid-tumor cancers, and provide support for further studies in cancer patients. [Renier Brentjens, MD, PhD](#), Deputy Director and the Katherine Anne Gioia Endowed Chair in Cancer Medicine at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, served as principal investigator of the study, “IL-18-secreting CAR T cells targeting DLL3 are highly effective in small cell lung cancer models,” [published](#) in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

### **From AACR 2023: Roswell Park Researchers Highlight Patient, Survivor Survey on Cannabis**

As the legalization of medicinal and recreational cannabis becomes more common in localities across the country, so does research on its use and effects. Results of an anonymous cancer patient and survivor survey conducted by a team from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center’s Center for Translational Research on Cannabis and Cancer ([CTRCC](#)) were shared at the American Association for Cancer Research 2023 Annual Meeting in Orlando.

In a poster session on Wednesday, April 19, from 9-12:30 EDT, graduate student Michelle Goulette will present the findings of [“the study, which was led senior author and Roswell Park faculty member Danielle Smith, PhD, MPH.](#)

### **FTD/TPI Plus Oxaliplatin Well-Tolerated but not Broadly Effective as Treatment for Esophageal Cancer**

A recent research effort led by [Sarbjit Mukherjee, MD, MS](#), Assistant Professor of Oncology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, demonstrated that a new chemotherapy combination — trifluridine/tipiracil (FTD/TPI) and oxaliplatin — is well tolerated and has activity among patients with esophageal cancer.

While this particular combination, when given before standard chemoradiation, did not improve outcomes in all patients, Dr. Mukherjee and his team are currently performing additional analyses to identify subgroups who may benefit from induction chemotherapy with trifluridine/tipiracil and oxaliplatin. Findings from this late-breaking phase 2 clinical study were presented during the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting in Orlando, Florida.

### **Benefit of Chemotherapy for Patients With Early-Stage Breast Cancer Varies by Tumor Anatomy**

A large retrospective study conducted by physician researchers from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center reported the benefits of chemotherapy for many patients with early-stage breast cancer with rare variant histology, or tumor anatomy. These findings were presented by first author [Arya Mariam Roy, MBBS](#), during the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting in Orlando, Florida.

### **Multidisciplinary Review Panel Shown to Move Treatment Recommendations Toward Best Practices**

Research from Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center shows that following the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) clinical practice guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer results in better outcomes for patients — but adherence to the guidelines depends on where the patient is diagnosed and treated and what type of cancer is involved.

The team's research reveals that case review by a panel of specialists who follow those guidelines for treating localized prostate cancer has resulted in better adherence by community urologists. The study, "Impact of an NCCN-Compliant Multidisciplinary Conference on Treatment Decisions for Localized Prostate Cancer," was led by principal investigator [Khurshid Guru, MD](#), Chair of the Department of Urology and Director of Robotic Surgery at Roswell Park. The new research has been [published](#) in the *Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network*.

### **Insights on Pancreatic Cancer Microbiome, Phase 2 Esophageal Cancer Study Top Roswell Park's AACR Presentations**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center physician-scientists and researchers presented new research on emerging treatment options and population health at the 2023 annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, taking place in Orlando, Florida, from April 14-19.

[Prasenjit Dey, PhD](#), Associate Professor of Oncology in the Department of Immunology, was an invited speaker for the major symposium "Cancer Ecosystem and the Microenvironment," on April 19. Dr. Dey discussed major findings from his lab on type 2 or "helper" immune cells and how they interact with the ecosystem surrounding pancreatic cancers with the KRAS G12D mutation, one of the most prevalent genetic abnormalities in the disease.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**

### **Pastor Craig Pridgen serves as guest chaplain for the House of Representatives**

Pastor Craig Pridgen, a Senior Advisor with Roswell Park's Community and Governmental Affairs and Organizational Development teams, gave the opening prayer in Washington, D.C., as guest chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives, invited by Rep. Brian Higgins.

"As the psalm is declared, 'how wonderful and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity.'" Pastor Pridgen's prayer was entered into the Congressional Record and preserved.

### **Importance of Clinical Trials shared with community**

Roswell Park hosted the Good for the Neighborhood Event at Mount Olive! Dr. Igor Puzanov, Director of the Center for Early Phase Clinical Trials, spoke about the importance of clinical research trials and how people can get involved.

### **Together We Thrive: Roswell Park Celebrates Growth, Access to Care & Comfort in 2023**

In times of need, and in times of joy, we join together. Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is proud to celebrate and share a year of opportunities, stories and support through its fourth Community Annual Report.

Heart and passion are on full display in "Together We Thrive: Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Our Community," which stitches together a tapestry of events, partnerships and life on campus throughout 50 vibrant pages.

### **2024 Super Bowl Ad Brings Viewers Face to Snout With Roswell Park Therapy Dogs**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center spotlighted its 2024 Super Bowl MVPs — the Most Valuable Pups who are considered the "goodest boys and girls" by patients and staff alike. The cancer center debuted "Tails of Hope," a local television commercial featuring its therapy dog program, in the Buffalo market during the big game on Sunday, February 11.

### **Roswell Park announces fourth IceCycle to end cancer event in March**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center launched registration for the fourth annual [IceCycle](#) fundraising event, presented by the West Herr Automotive Group. This event

brought together 13 WNY fitness studios and more than 1,000 participants on March 8 and 9 to take a 45-minute cycling class on ice while raising funds for research and programs at Roswell Park.

### **Senator Tim Kennedy Joins Roswell Park Doctors, Patients Impacted by Sickle Cell Disease to Call for Expedited Medicaid Approval of New Gene Therapy Cures**

Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined pediatric hematologist/oncologist [Steven Ambrusko MD, MS](#), at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center to urge the New York State Department of Health to expedite the coverage approval process for a new groundbreaking gene therapy that is being hailed as a cure for [sickle cell disease](#). On December 8, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the transformative treatment, which works by editing the DNA in a patient's stem cells. Doctors say this one-time, multi-month treatment will replace the many years of painful treatments and finally provide relief and hope for patients who have long suffered from the disease, which disproportionately impacts Black communities. In New York State, one of every 365 Black infants are born with sickle cell disease, while one in 13 Black infants are born with the sickle cell trait.

### **Responding to National Gap in Screening and Early Detection, Leading Lung Cancer Orgs Unite to Advance Comprehensive, Life-Saving Action on Lung Cancer**

The [American Lung Association](#), [GO2 for Lung Cancer](#) and [LUNgevity Foundation](#) joined voices with Congressional leaders, lung cancer survivors and experts to demand national action to reduce suffering and death from lung cancer. With individuals affected by this most deadly cancer type by their side, today, these leading lung cancer organizations and Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-25) outlined a comprehensive slate of legislation to address the gaping divide between actionable, easily implemented policy and education initiatives and the realities that mean someone in the U.S. dies of lung cancer every 4 minutes.

"We know screening to detect lung cancers early saves lives, we know who we should be screening, we know screening is painless, noninvasive, quick and cost-effective, and yet we have shockingly low rates of lung cancer early detection. We have to do better for the tens of thousands who will be diagnosed with lung cancer each month this year, and we know what some of the biggest barriers are that we have to tackle to get there," said [Mary Reid, PhD](#), Chief of Cancer Screening and Survivorship at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, who spoke at the event.

### **New York State Grant Will Expand Prostate Cancer Education for African Americans in Erie County**

A program designed to help African Americans make informed decisions about prostate cancer early detection and treatment will expand in Erie County thanks to a New York State Department of Health (DOH) grant to [Adam Sumlin, PhD, MBA](#), Assistant Professor of Oncology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. The grant — one of only four awarded in the

state — provides \$650,000 over the next five years through the DOH program Peer Education, Outreach & Shared Decision-Making for Persons at High Risk of Prostate Cancer.

### **Roswell Park Welcomes Western New York Into New Community Outreach & Engagement Center**

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has transformed a 150-year-old residence at 907 Michigan Ave., blending history and vision into a welcoming new home for its community outreach: the [Roswell Park Community Outreach & Engagement Center](#). Roswell Park team members, patients, advocates and community leaders gathered for a grand opening of the renovated and expanded space.

### **Contract Renewal Ensures Continued Support for Smokers Trying to Quit**

Every year, more than 30,000 people contact the [New York State Smokers' Quitline](#) for help in ending their dependence on commercial tobacco products. That lifeline will remain in place, thanks to the New York State Health Department's renewal of its contract with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, home of the Quitline since it began 23 years ago. Awarded on a competitive basis, the \$20 million contract ensures funding for the program for the next five years.

### **Roswell Park Program Aims to Boost Quit Rate Among People Disproportionately Affected by Tobacco Use**

Some communities suffer disproportionately from the health effects of tobacco use, which causes 30% of all cancer deaths. But while most people who use tobacco want to quit — including growing numbers who want to quit vaping — many do not have access to effective treatment programs for tobacco and nicotine addiction in their communities.

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center aims to address this issue by offering scholarships to New York State residents to cover full tuition for the [Roswell Park Tobacco Treatment Specialist \(TTS\) Training Program](#). The cancer center has dedicated \$500,000 to support training of up to 100 Tobacco Treatment Specialists per year for five years.