Lurie Cancer Center Scientists Receive NCI Outstanding Investigator Awards

THREE SCIENTISTS from the Lurie Cancer Center have been awarded seven-year, $6.4 million grants from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to embark on projects that have unusual potential to advance cancer research.

Marcus Peter, PhD, professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology/Oncology and Leader of the Translational Research in Solid Tumors Program at the Lurie Cancer Center, and Ali Shilatifard, PhD, chair and Robert Francis Furchgott Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, were chosen to receive the NCI’s R35 Outstanding Investigator Awards.

In addition to Peter and Shilatifard, Maciej Lesniak, MD, chair of Neurological Surgery at Northwestern Medicine as of November 1, was also chosen to receive an NCI Outstanding Investigator Award while a professor at the University of Chicago. In research he will continue at the Lurie Cancer Center, he plans to develop therapies for malignant brain tumors by targeting stem cells.

The new NCI program, which is completing its inaugural round of funding this year, was established to support experienced and exceptional investigators. Award recipients are encouraged to use the grant to be more adventurous and to take greater risks so that they can break new ground in their lines of inquiry.

“Three of the first 30 NCI Outstanding Investigator Awards are carried by Lurie Cancer Center members, a reflection of Northwestern’s innovative cancer research efforts,” said Leonidas Platanias, MD, PhD, director of the Lurie Cancer Center. “It also reflects our increasing depth and strength as one of the leading cancer programs in the country.”

Read more »

Hospira Foundation's $5M Gift Creates Professorship in Translational Cancer Biology at the Lurie Cancer Center

A $5 MILLION gift from the Hospira Foundation to Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine will establish the Hospira Foundation Professorship in Translational Cancer Biology at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University. The professorship is the first of its kind at the University.

In addition to creating the endowed professorship to exist in perpetuity, the gift will be used to support the research activities of the professor, including his or her laboratory and the training of graduate students and fellows.

Read more »
Lurie Cancer Center Receives Prestigious NCI Funding to Foster Cancer Research

THREE MAJOR grants from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) will tackle cancer in Chicago's lower-income, minority neighborhoods, accelerate prostate cancer research, and support efforts to develop leading-edge treatments using nanotechnology.

$17.4 Million Grant to Reduce Cancer Disparities

A $17.4 million grant from the NCI will help three Chicago universities work together with many of the city's underserved communities to foster meaningful cancer research, education, training and outreach.

The five-year grant is led by Principal Investigator Melissa Simon, MD, co-leader of the Lurie Cancer Center's Cancer Control and Survivorship Program, in collaboration with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and Northeastern Illinois University.

“Despite the existence of five academic medical centers and millions of dollars spent on cancer research and treatment of Chicago residents, we are still only in our infancy in responding to cancer health disparities,” said Simon. “We have been working on setting the groundwork and assembling this grant over the last five years as a way to move forward and foster the wonderful work of communities and organizations already working towards improving cancer equity.”

$11 Million Grant for SPORE in Prostate Cancer

The Lurie Cancer Center has been awarded a new $11 million, five-year competitive grant from the NCI for its continued leadership of a Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) in prostate cancer; one of only eight in the country.

First funded in 2001, the multi-center consortium provides an integrated scientific environment that leverages the expertise and resources of its members to strengthen the proposed research projects. “The SPORE represents a major investment by the NCI in our prostate cancer research program,” said William Catalona, MD, the Prostate SPORE's principal investigator and director of the Lurie Cancer Center’s Clinical Prostate Cancer Program. “We are delighted to be selected again for this prestigious award, achieved through an incredible team effort. The translational work performed under the SPORE will have a significant impact on the outcomes and overall quality of life of prostate cancer patients.”

$11.7 Million Grant to Improve Treatment Using Nanotechnology

A five-year, $11.7 million grant from the NCI will support the new Northwestern University Center for Cancer Nanotechnology Excellence (Northwestern CCNE). Under the direction of principal investigators, Chad Mirkin, PhD, and Leonidas Platanias, MD, PhD, the Northwestern CCNE will use nucleic-acid-based nanoconstructs called Spherical Nucleic Acids (SNAs) to gain access to intracellular environments, discover new aspects of cancer biology and create effective cancer treatment options.

Combining the strengths and resources of the Lurie Cancer Center and the International Institute for Nanotechnology (IIN), the center will unite scientists, engineers and clinicians from diverse fields, such as nanoscience, cancer biology, chemistry, materials science, physics, engineering and medicine. They will work towards the common goal of developing SNA nanostructures poised to enter the clinic as revolutionary, cancer-killing agents to improve and save the lives of patients suffering from glioblastoma multiforme and prostate cancer, two of the most deadly forms of cancer.
2016 Liz and Eric Lefkofsky Innovation Research Award Recipients

THE LURIE CANCER CENTER is pleased to announce the four recipients of the 2016 Liz and Eric Lefkofsky Innovation Research Awards. Funded by a $1 million donation to the Lurie Cancer Center from Liz and Eric Lefkofsky to further the study of oncology treatment, the awards were established to provide Lurie Cancer Center investigators with the resources to conduct highly innovative cancer-relevant pilot studies that can serve as foundations for larger, nationally funded studies.

Based on the outstanding progress made during their initial year of funding, two awardees from 2015 received funding to continue their projects for a second year. Two additional investigators received 2016 Innovation Research Awards that will support new pilot projects.

The new Liz and Eric Lefkofsky Scholars are:

- **Vadim Backman, PhD**
  Professor of Biomedical Engineering
  McCormick School of Engineering
  Chromatin protection therapy: A new paradigm to combat cancer chemoresistance

- **Ali Shilatifard, PhD**
  Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics
  Feinberg School of Medicine
  Transcription elongation control in cancer therapeutics

2015 Liz and Eric Lefkofsky Scholars whose award was renewed for 2016 are:

- **Laura Lackner, PhD**
  Assistant Professor of Molecular Biosciences
  Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
  Identifying new ways to inhibit mitochondrial division, a process essential for cancer cell proliferation and metastasis

- **Athanasios Vasilopoulos, PhD**
  Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology
  Feinberg School of Medicine
  Acetylation of KRAS lysine 147 is a novel oncogenic post-translational modification directed by SIRT2

Giles Appointed Chief of Hematology/Oncology

**FRANCIS GILES, MD,** has been appointed chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Medicine. In his new role, Dr. Giles says he will continue to advance the division’s clinical, research and academic pursuits. He has led the launch and growth of Northwestern Medicine Developmental Therapeutics Institute (NMDTI), and was appointed Deputy Director of the Lurie Cancer Center in 2014, where he leads clinical research activities.

“I am very pleased that Frank will lead the Division of Hematology/Oncology,” said Leonidas Platanias, MD, PhD, Director of the Lurie Cancer Center. “In his role as deputy director of the Lurie Cancer Center he has made major contributions and has provided strong leadership in the expansion of our clinical and translational research operations. His appointment as chief of Hematology/Oncology will allow us to optimize the integration of clinical oncology operations and will enhance delivery of cutting edge clinical care to our patients.”

A cancer specialist with more than two decades of experience, Dr. Giles has led the development of novel drugs, immunotherapies and other targeted approaches, including cancer-directed viruses, monoclonal antibodies and molecularly directed agents. He has served as principal investigator on numerous national and international clinical studies and holds numerous patents and technology licenses.

“The best patient care is delivered in an optimal research environment. This is a very exciting and challenging time when we have unprecedented opportunities to translate science into better results for our patients,” Dr. Giles said. “Operating within world-leading facilities and institutions, our division and the Lurie Cancer Center continue to be leaders in delivering on the promise of this golden age of scientific progress while we nurture the next generations of physician-scientists who will accelerate this progress.”
Renowned Physician-Scientists Join the Lurie Cancer Center

Lesniak Named Chair of Neurological Surgery

Influential neurosurgical oncologist Maciej (Matt) Lesniak, MD, has been named the Michael J. Marchese Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurological Surgery at the Feinberg School of Medicine and Northwestern Memorial Hospital, and Program Leader for Neuro-Oncology at the Lurie Cancer Center.

Dr. Lesniak’s research interests are focused on novel targeted therapies for brain cancer, including gene therapy, stem cell biology, immunotherapy, and nanotechnology. He is currently the principal investigator of six multi-million dollar grants funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as well as a recipient of the 2015 National Cancer Institute Outstanding Investigator Award for exceptional and transformative cancer research.

Read more »

Schaeffer Named Chair of Urology

Edward (Ted) M. Schaeffer, MD, PhD, an internationally recognized physician-scientist with deep expertise in urologic oncology, has been named chair of the department of Urology at the Feinberg School of Medicine and Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

A clinician with expertise in open, laparoscopic and robotic treatment of urologic malignancies, Dr. Schaeffer’s lab has had funding by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Prostate Cancer Foundation, specifically focuses on the molecular biology of locally aggressive prostate cancers and the impact of race on the biology of prostate cancer.

“It is an honor to be named the next Chair of Urology at Northwestern,” Dr. Schaeffer said. “I am really looking forward to working with Dr. Platanias and the great team of scientists and clinicians at the Lurie Cancer Center.”

Read more »

The Launch of the Cancer Institutes

ON OCTOBER 22, nearly 200 members of the Lurie Cancer Center, leaders from across Northwestern University and Northwestern Medicine, and supporters and friends came together to celebrate the launch of the Cancer Institutes within the Lurie Cancer Center. As part of the evening’s program, research teams from the Lurie Cancer Center presented nearly 30 posters with topics ranging from clinical trials in thoracic oncology, global health, and brain tumor immunotherapy, to integrative medicine, genome sequencing, and survivorship.

Leonidas Platanias, MD, PhD, provided an overview of the Lurie Cancer Center’s programs and services and highlighted the promise of initiatives such as Northwestern OncoSET to develop and deliver “never-before-realized personalized cancer treatment.”

Northwestern University Trustee and benefactor Ann Lurie described the “compassion, understanding and superb care,” she and her husband, Robert, experienced at Northwestern nearly 30 years ago. “I am proud to have watched the Lurie Cancer Center’s evolution —internationally renowned, yet always focused on the individual and family.”

Read more »

New NCI Cancer Centers Identity Badge

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has developed new badges for Comprehensive Cancer Centers, replacing the old logos. NCI-designated Cancer Centers are encouraged to use the new badge and discontinue use of the old logos on website, slides and presentations going forward.

Please contact Jennifer Bowker at j-bowker@northwestern.edu about the use of the NCI Identity Badge for the promotion, advocacy, educational, and other related activities of the Lurie Cancer Center.
Coffee Associated with Colon Cancer Survival

PATIENTS TREATED for colon cancer who regularly drank caffeinated coffee had lower rates of cancer recurrence and mortality, according to a recent study co-authored by Al B. Benson, III, MD, Associate Director for Cooperative Groups at the Lurie Cancer Center.

The study, published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, involved 953 patients who participated in a clinical trial comparing two treatments for stage III colon cancer. While no significant difference between the therapies was found, data from questionnaires the patients filled out about their diets as they underwent treatment provided compelling insights. Following up a median of seven years after patients completed the questionnaires, the investigators determined that those who had consumed four or more cups of coffee a day were 42 percent less likely to have their cancer return compared to non-coffee drinkers, and they were 33 percent less likely to die from cancer or any other cause.

“There has been a great deal of interest in looking at diet and lifestyle factors as prevention strategies for colorectal cancer,” said Dr. Benson, Professor of Hematology/Oncology at Feinberg. “It seemed that if these factors might contribute to an increased or decreased risk of developing colon cancer, it would be wise to study these factors for people who already have cancer, too.”

Promising Strategy for Treating Rare Forms of Leukemia

IN A NEW study published in Nature Medicine, Lurie Cancer Center scientists identified a drug that stops the reproduction of cancer cells in models of primary myelofibrosis, a rare and incurable form of chronic leukemia that disrupts normal blood cell production and causes scarring in the bone marrow.

The drug, a compound called MLN8237 also known as Alisertib, drives bone marrow cells called megakaryocytes to differentiate – to mature and stop proliferating. “Both megakaryocytic leukemia and myelofibrosis are characterized by immature, abnormal bone marrow cells that just keep growing,” said senior author John Crispino, PhD, the Robert I. Lurie, MD and Lora S. Lurie Professor of Medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine and Associate Director for Education and Training at the Lurie Cancer Center. “This new paper shows that Alisertib has an anti-tumor effect in samples of myelofibrosis, similar to what we saw in megakaryocytic leukemia.”

New Player in Lung Cancer Progression Discovered

WORLDWIDE, lung cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer. In a recent study, Lurie Cancer Center scientists showed for the first time that the Myosin 9b gene is correlated with lung cancer tumor formation and metastasis.

Myo9b, the protein that the gene encodes, was seen in approximately 90 percent of lung cancer tissue samples in the study, and higher levels of it predicted shorter patient survival. The finding suggests that reducing or silencing expression of Myo9b in cancer cells could help patients suffering from metastatic lung cancer.

“Elevated Myo9b expression is associated with fast lung cancer progression and poor prognosis,” said principal investigator Jane Wu, MD, PhD, the Dr. Charles L. Mix Research Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry. “These observations suggest exciting possibility of developing Myo9b as a new biomarker for cancer, especially lung cancer.”
LINDA EMANUEL, MD, PhD, has joined the Lurie Cancer Center’s Supportive Oncology Team, offering crucial psychological support for family caregivers. An internist and palliative care expert, Dr. Emanuel is also a psychotherapist/psychoanalyst providing coordinated care for patients and family caregivers, or to individuals related to a person affected by cancer.

For many people, the challenges of coping with the diagnosis and treatment of illness evokes feelings that can interfere with gratifying relationships or achieving personal goals. Dr. Emanuel offers a variety of approaches in her work with cancer caregivers and other family members, including:

• Psychodynamic counseling
• Psychoanalysis
• Dignity Therapy and other meaning- and life cycle-based approaches to adjusting and developing in the face of challenges.

For more information or to make a referral call 312.695.0990.

Holiday Toy Drive

Please help brighten the day for our youngest patients. The Lurie Cancer Center is collecting new unwrapped toys for patients from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital receiving treatment in our Radiation Oncology Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Drop off boxes are available through January 11 at the locations listed below. Thank you!

• Galter Pavilion, 21st floor
• Prentice Women’s Hospital, 4th and 15th floors
• Arkes Family Pavilion, 12th floor
• Lurie Medical Research Center, 3rd floor

Summer Research Programs for Students

TRAINING the next generation of clinicians and scientists is at the foundation of the Lurie Cancer Center’s mission. Our summer research programs give underserved students the opportunity to learn and become active participants in cancer research.

Applications are available for the following Summer Research Programs:

The CURE (Continuing Umbrella of Research Experience) program offers underserved undergraduate students the opportunity to participate in laboratory summer research experiences. Details and application »

The Chicago Region-Physical Sciences Oncology Center (CR-PSOC) offers laboratory research experiences for underserved college students interested in the physical and biomedical sciences. Details and application »

ChicagoCHEC Research Fellows program is a comprehensive learning experience for undergraduate and postbaccalaureate students at Northeastern Illinois University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University, and City Colleges of Chicago who are planning to apply to graduate or medical school. Details and application »
Serdar Bulun, MD, Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Feinberg, has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), formerly known as the Institute of Medicine. The NAM was established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences to honor both professional achievement and commitment to volunteer service, and serves as a national resource and source of expertise on issues related to health, medicine, biomedical science and related policy.

Read more »

William Gradishar, MD, Betsy Bramsen Professor of Breast Oncology at Feinberg and Director of the Maggie Daley Center for Women’s Cancer Care, has been appointed to the editorial board of the American Society of Clinical Oncology’s (ASCO) new Journal of Global Oncology (JGO), founded to address cancer care, research, and care delivery issues unique to countries and settings with limited health-care resources. JGO published the first issue of the online-only, open-access journal in September. The Journal of Global Oncology was founded to address cancer care, research, and care delivery issues unique to countries and settings with limited health-care resources.

Mark Hersam, PhD, Professor in the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science and the Director of the Materials Research Science and Engineering Center, has been named the Walter P. Murphy Professor in Materials Science and Engineering.

John A Kalapurakal, MD, Professor in Radiation Oncology and Neurological Surgery at Feinberg, has been appointed Chair of the Children’s Oncology Group’s (COG) Radiation Oncology Discipline Committee. A NCI-supported clinical trials group, COG is the world’s largest organization devoted exclusively to childhood and adolescent cancer research.

Chad A. Mirkin, PhD, George B. Rathmann Professor of Chemistry in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and Director of Northwestern’s International Institute for Nanotechnology, has been awarded the inaugural $400,000 Raymond and Beverly Sackler Prize in Convergence Research from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). This year’s prize is being awarded for convergence research that benefits human health.

Read more »

Richard Silverman, PhD, the John Evans Professor of Chemistry in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, has been named the Patrick G. Ryan/Aon Professor.
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, the Lurie Cancer Center offers professional education on various cancer-related topics. Below is a list of programs scheduled through February 2016.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT cancer.northwestern.edu or call 312.695.1391

NCCN 2016 Congress Series™: BREAST CANCER
with Updates from the 2015 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

Friday, February 12
Prentice Women's Hospital, Conference Room L
Chair: William Gradishar, MD

Weekly Lectures

BASIC RESEARCH SEMINARS
Thursdays: 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

» Schedule at cancer.northwestern.edu/br

GRAND ROUNDS
Fridays: 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m

Sponsored by the Division of Hematology/Oncology, Feinberg School of Medicine and the Lurie Cancer Center. This activity has been approved for 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™

» Schedule at cancer.northwestern.edu/grandrounds

To receive weekly reminders about Grand Rounds or Basic Research Seminars please contact Denise Marshall at d-marshall4@northwestern.edu.

Funding Opportunities

Travel Grants

Travel Fellowship Awards

The Katten Muchin Rosenman Travel Scholarship Program allows doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows to present the results of their basic cancer research.

The Center for Genetic Medicine Travel Fellowship allows doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows to present the results of their basic cancer research showing its genetics relevance.

The Cancer Prevention Travel Scholarship Program allows doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows to present the results of their laboratory, clinical, population or behavioral research with implications for cancer prevention.

The next available Travel Fellowship Award application deadline is March 4, 2015.

» Details and application here

Basic Sciences Research Division

H Foundation NCI Stimulus provides $20,000 of support to projects to stimulate grant applications to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and accepted until funds for the year are expended.

» Details and application here

Lea Charitable Trust Equipment Grants

Through the generous support of the Lea Charitable Trust, a pool of funds is available to full members of the Lurie Cancer Center affiliated with one of the Basic Sciences Research Programs for use by multiple investigators or to support small equipment grants for collaborative research projects.

Grants are made on a rolling basis as funds become available.

» Details and application here
17th Annual Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Symposium

THE 17TH ANNUAL Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Symposium continued its tradition of attracting a faculty of experts from around the world. More than 700 practicing clinicians participated in the Lurie Cancer Center’s multidisciplinary CME program; providing a forum for leading medical, surgical and radiation oncologists to present, debate and evaluate cutting-edge technology and approaches in the management of breast cancer.

Chaired by William Gradishar, MD, the powerful and engaging event took place from October 29 – November 1 at the Fairmont Chicago. Co-Chairs are V. Craig Jordan, OBE, PhD, DSc, Monica Morrow, MD, and Nora Hansen, MD.

Save the date: the 2016 symposium will be held in Chicago from September 22-25.

2015 Oncofertility Conference Sparks Critical Conversations

THE NINTH annual Oncofertility Conference, hosted by the Oncofertility Consortium at Northwestern University on our Chicago Campus November 3-5, provided a forum for “Critical Conversations in Oncofertility: Pediatrics and Beyond.” Leonidas Platanias, MD, PhD, joined Teresa Woodruff, PhD, in welcoming more than 250 researchers, clinicians, patient advocates and trainees from around the world who are dedicated to ensuring reproductive health for young cancer patients whose disease or treatment may impair fertility.

Woodruff is the Thomas J. Watkins Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Feinberg School of Medicine and Director of the Oncofertility Consortium, a national initiative designed to explore the reproductive future of cancer survivors. She is also Chief of the Division of Fertility Preservation at Feinberg, Director of the Women’s Health Research Institute at Northwestern University and a member of the Lurie Cancer Center.

For the first time, the Oncofertility Conference was held back to back with the Critical Mass Annual Conference, linked by a joint reception. The Lurie Cancer Center’s Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology Program works closely with Critical Mass on initiatives to transform the care and treatment of young adults with cancer, and were actively involved in the planning for the 2015 conference in Chicago.

Reminder: Lurie Cancer Center Brand Guidelines

The Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University must be used on first reference in all communications.

Use the Lurie Cancer Center on second and all subsequent references in the same document.

- The words “of Northwestern University” should remain in all primary references to the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center.
- No other derivations of the formal name should be used.

Questions about logo, photos and/or name usage? Please contact Jennifer Bowker at 312.695.0502 or j-bowker@northwestern.edu.
New Members

Paul Burridge, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Pharmacology at Feinberg. His research is focused on the role of the genome in influencing drug responses, a field known as pharmacogenomics or personalized medicine. The Burridge lab’s major model is human induced pluripotent stem cells (hiPSCs), generated from patients’ blood or skin. Dr. Burridge uses a combination of next-generation sequencing, automation and robotics, high-throughput drug screening, high-content imaging, tissue engineering, electrophysiological and physiological testing to better understand the mechanisms of drug response and action. The lab’s primary focus is on patient-specific responses to chemotherapy agents; asking the question: what is the genetic reason why some patients have minimal side effects of their cancer treatments, whilst others encounter highly detrimental side effects?

Contact Dr. Burridge at paul.burridge@northwestern.edu

Jaehyuk Choi, MD, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Dermatology and Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at Feinberg. The focus of his research is on using cutting-edge genomics approaches to elucidate the pathophysiology of skin cancer and identify novel therapeutic strategies. Dr. Choi’s cancer genetics lab has used whole genome sequencing, whole exome sequencing, RNA- Sequencing, and genome-wide screening approaches to identify genes and pathways underlying cutaneous T cell lymphoma, merkel cell carcinoma, and melanoma.

Contact Dr. Choi at jaehyuk.choi@northwestern.edu

Massimo Cristofanilli, MD, is Associate Director for Precision Medicine and Translational Research and Director of the Northwestern OncoSET research program at the Lurie Cancer Center. He is also Professor in Hematology/Oncology at Feinberg. An expert in the translational research and treatment of patients with inflammatory breast cancer (IBC), Dr. Cristofanilli known for contributions in several area of clinical and translational research including, the detection of and molecular characterization of micrometastatic disease, research and treatment of inflammatory breast cancer (IBC), the most aggressive and deadly form of breast cancer, and drug development with particular focus on molecularly targeted therapies. He has led the development of novel diagnostic and prognostic markers in primary and metastatic breast cancer (MBC). Dr. Cristofanilli’s research is focused on advancing a patient-centered, biology driven model of cancer care; combining sophisticated tissue and blood-based molecular diagnostic technologies and innovative treatments. Most recently, he led the Phase III randomized study evaluating palbociclib in combination with Fulvestrant in patients with metastatic estrogen-receptor positive disease (PALOMA-3).

Contact Dr. Cristofanilli at massimo.cristofanilli@nm.org

Daniel Foltz, PhD is Associate Professor in Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at Feinberg. His research is focused on the important basic question of how chromosomes are segregated during cell division to ensure the complete and accurate inheritance of the genome. Specifically, Dr. Foltz's lab is interested in understanding how epigenetic mechanisms regulate faithful segregation of chromosomes during cell division. The immediate goal is to determine the mechanism of epigenetic centromere inheritance, with a long-term goal of delineating the role of this process in tumorigenesis, and translating our basic understanding of the enzymes and proteins involved in this process into therapeutic approaches for targeting cancer cells.

Contact Dr Foltz at dfoltz@northwestern.edu

Yuan He, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Molecular Biosciences at the Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences. He is interested in understanding the molecular mechanisms by which large, multi-subunit complexes engage in DNA-centric processes using cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM) and other biophysical and biochemical approaches. Dr. He’s lab is focused on studying how eukaryotic gene transcription is regulated at different stages, as well as how various types of DNA damage are repaired and why deficiencies in these repair pathways lead to pathology of cancer predisposition or accelerated aging.

Contact Dr. He at yuanhe@northwestern.edu

Craig Horbinski, MD, PhD, is Associate Professor in Pathology and Neurological Surgery at Feinberg. The main focus of Dr. Horbinski’s translational work is on the effects of altered glioma metabolism in the microenvironment. Mutations in isocitrate dehydrogenase 1 or 2 (mutant IDH1/2) are present in a large proportion of gliomas, and are known to alter tumor metabolism and DNA methylation. Dr.Horbinski was the first to discover that these mutations also suppress thrombosis, both within the tumor and throughout the patient. Current efforts are using this new knowledge to develop targeted coagulation-based treatments for brain cancer. Dr. Horbinski also directs the banking of brain tumor specimens for research purposes. This initiative provides all Lurie Cancer Center researchers with patient-derived biospecimens and tumor neuropathological support.

Contact Dr. Horbinski at craig.horbinski@northwestern.edu
Welcome
New Members

Jason Kaplan, MD is Assistant Professor in Hematology/Oncology at Feinberg. His clinical research within Northwestern Medicine Developmental Therapeutics Institute is focused on offering novel therapeutic approaches for hematologic malignancies. Dr. Kaplan also provides cutting edge therapies for patients through the weekly Cutaneous Lymphoma Clinic, and treats patients at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center's Hematology/Oncology clinic one day each week.

Contact Dr. Kaplan at jason.kaplan@northwestern.edu

Marc Mendillo, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at Feinberg. Dr. Mendillo’s research group bridges biochemical, genetic and chemical biology approaches with systematic high-throughput and genomic methods to define the mechanisms that govern the cellular protein homeostasis network. Their long-term goal is to elucidate the molecular mechanisms that influence and define cellular stress response systems and understand how these systems are co-opted and perturbed in malignancies.

Contact Dr. Mendillo at mendillo@northwestern.edu

David Odell, MD is Assistant Professor in Thoracic Surgery at Feinberg. A surgeon whose research focuses on surgical outcomes and the delivery of quality care, Dr. Odell’s clinical focus is in thoracic oncology with a particular interest in minimally invasive techniques for the treatment of lung and esophageal cancer and diseases of the mediastinum. He is also a member of the lung transplant program at Northwestern Medicine. Additionally, Dr. Odell co-founded the Thoracic Education Co-Operative Group (TECoG) a national network for collaborative research in thoracic surgery education, and has a particular interest in health services research, focusing on the development of quality and process improvement measures in thoracic oncology.

Contact Dr. Odell at dodell@northwestern.edu

Guillermo Oliver, PhD, is Professor in Nephrology at Feinberg. He is interested in understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms controlling organogenesis, with a particular focus on the brain and lymphatic vasculature. His laboratory focus includes identification of genes participating in the formation of the lymphatic vasculature, and the relationship between defective lymphatics and obesity. Currently he is extending this work to study how a defective lymphatic vasculature can impact the formation and grow of different highly vascularized tumors.

Contact Dr. Oliver at guillermo.oliver@northwestern.edu

Sandeep Samant, MD, is Director of Head and Neck Surgery at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at Feinberg. As Chief of the Northwestern Medicine Head and Neck Program, Dr. Samant leads the development of clinical and research initiatives for the program, which specializes in the treatment of tumors of the face, head and neck. A head and neck surgeon and an otolaryngologist specializing in minimally invasive surgery utilizing robotic and endoscopic techniques, his clinical interests include multidisciplinary management of oral oropharyngeal laryngeal, nasal and sinus cancer, thyroid and parathyroid tumors and endoscopic skull base surgery. Dr. Samant’s research interests are directed toward the goal of developing novel treatment combinations in treating oral and oropharyngeal cancers for improving survival and functional outcomes by combining advancements in surgery, radiation and drug therapy. He is also studying the effect of immunophenotype of tumor infiltrating lymphocytes on treatment outcomes.

Contact Dr. Samant at sandeep.samant@northwestern.edu

Shohreh Shahabi, MD, is Chief of Gynecologic Oncology and the John and Ruth Brewer Professor of Gynecology and Cancer Research at Feinberg. Dr. Shahabi is also a member of the Lurie Cancer Center’s Executive Committee and the Clinical Cancer Center’s Executive Council. Focused on discovering biomarkers for prediction of treatment responses and survival outcomes of patients with gynecologic cancers, research in Dr. Shahabi’s lab has contributed to promising discoveries in the field of gynecologic oncology. Her current goal is to characterize the functional consequences of common p53 mutations associated with differential patient survival times using ovarian cancer models. The team also hopes to use model systems including patient derived xenographs and patient-derived samples from clinical trials to evaluate and validate biomarkers for patient selection for intraperitoneal chemotherapy.

Contact Dr. Shahabi at sshahabi@nm.org

Lisa Wu, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Medical Social Sciences at Feinberg. Her research is focused on examining quality of life and survivorship issues in cancer patients, particularly cognitive impairment. In recent years, Dr. Wu has channeled her interest in neurorehabilitation into her research, which is primarily focused on the neurobehavioral and neurocognitive changes associated with cancer and its treatment, and the development of interventions to treat such changes. She is also interested in the underlying biological and chronobiological mechanisms of cognitive impairment in cancer survivors.

Contact Dr. Wu at lisa.wu1@northwestern.edu
## What's New

**Lurie Cancer Center**  
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312.695.1304  

**Director**  
Leonidas Platanias, MD, PhD  

**Associate Director, Administration**  
Aleksander Zafirovski, MBA  

**Managing Editor**  
Jennifer Bowker  

**Designer**  
Victoria Spah

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**Help Wanted:** Reporters

Please send suggestions for this newsletter to Jennifer Bowker,  
[ j-bowker@northwestern.edu.](mailto:j-bowker@northwestern.edu)

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**Lurie Cancer Center Weekly Updates**

Information to be considered for inclusion in the Lurie Cancer Center's weekly e-mail updates must be received at least two weeks in advance. Submit suggestions to Denise Marshall at [d-marshall4@northwestern.edu](mailto:d-marshall4@northwestern.edu).

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### Welcome New Staff

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pamela Abbott</td>
<td>Morning Receptionist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarita Agte</td>
<td>Clinical Research Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Bers</td>
<td>Clinical Operations Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doreine Carson</td>
<td>Senior Program Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine Cho</td>
<td>Clinical Research Project Manager</td>
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<td>Seth Nathan</td>
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<td>Patrice Nixon</td>
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<td>Julie Vonhauser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shanshan Zhang</td>
<td>Research Study Coordinator Senior</td>
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