I'm Harriet Kluger. I'm a professor of medicine in medical oncology. I treat patients with Melanoma and renal cell carcinoma as well as patients with other types of skin cancers such as Merkel cell carcinoma. Towards the end of the 1990s it was becoming clearer and clearer that the big breakthroughs in understanding cellular biology would have major impact on oncology and therefore I decided to go into this field where I felt that I could actually
make a difference in contributing not only to patient care but in. To moving the field forward by doing clinical research, I generally recommend that people come into their first visit with a family member or a caregiver simply because the first visit is very overwhelming. We give people a lot of information and I think it's hard to retain all of it. So second set of ears is always beneficial. When I started taking care of patients with cancer, we pretty much only had chemotherapy as the molecular abnormalities within the cancer cells became
better and better understood.

We were able to develop drugs that target those political molecular abnormalities. So, in Melanoma, the molecular lesions are mutations in a gene called byref primarily and in kidney cancer. We have developed a whole slew of drugs that target the blood cell for the blood vessel formation within the tumor. So essentially, when we inhibit that, we starve the tumor a little bit of its nutrients, and that’s very effective in kidney cancer. The other major approach,
and that’s where most of the breakthroughs have actually occurred. Is in immunotherapy for cancer, so these cells sit within a tumor microenvironment. They’re not just sitting there by themselves, and if we can educate the immune system to recognize the cancer’s foreign and then activate it a little bit further to attack those cancer cells, we can then essentially get rid of the cancer using our own bodies immune system as the ammunition to do so. We have two fantastic teams that we work with, one for skin cancer and one
00:02:01.050 --> 00:02:02.085 for kidney cancer.

00:02:02.090 --> 00:02:04.430 We’re fortunate to have dedicated surgeons. Who understand the biology of the disease.

00:02:04.430 --> 00:02:06.957 They understand the drugs that they use that we use. They meet with us on a weekly basis and are able to tailor specific treatment plans for individual patients.