September 22, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

After months of work, today we are submitting our Cancer Center Support Grant renewal application to the National Cancer Institute today. As many of you know, receiving this grant is what allows us to call ourselves a Comprehensive Cancer Center. Next year will mark our 50th anniversary as a Comprehensive Cancer Center, a distinction awarded to only 56 centers in the U.S.

The grant application is a bit daunting—over 3,000 pages and more than 200 pages of single-spaced narrative. It took a village to put this grant together, and I am indebted to the Deputy and Associate Directors of the Cancer Center as well as the 15 research program leaders and the many administrative experts who worked thoughtfully, diligently, and tirelessly.

As challenging as the process was, I must admit that I learned a huge amount going through the process. I understand the workings of our cancer center better than ever before. As we assembled the grant, all of us thought about how we can improve our research, bring the lab and the clinic closer together, be more inclusive in our workforce, address the needs of the Connecticut population, reach out to members of the community as our true partners, and improve the training of the next generation of researchers, clinicians, and leaders in oncology.

Now that the application is submitted—said with a big sigh of relief! —it is time to move on to other tasks. None of us have taken our eyes off the goal to build an exceptional statewide multidisciplinary oncology program that provides the very best care to all patients and their families across Connecticut and beyond, while conducting cutting-edge research that will lead to new and better standards of care. Healthcare is more challenging than ever before, but we have a tremendous team and we are rapidly working our way towards the goal.

Be well. Have a great weekend and think about what we can all do together. THINK BIG.

Eric

Announcements

Parisa Lotfi, MD, Appointed to Radiology and Biomedical Imaging
Parisa Lotfi, MD, has joined the Smilow Cancer Hospital to lead the Radiology and Biomedical Imaging Division.
Parisa Lotfi, MD, has joined the Smilow Cancer Hospital breast imaging team as an Assistant Professor of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging. Dr. Lotfi is a fellowship-trained breast imager with more than 20 years of experience in all breast imaging modalities, including digital breast tomosynthesis, ultrasound, breast MRI, and contrast enhanced mammography, as well as all image guided procedures. Prior to joining Yale, she spent 18 years at Harvard’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC). Most recently, she was the director of the breast section’s clinical operations at BIDMC and Director of Connecticut Breast Imaging. Her interests include improving workflow, maximizing efficiency, and new technologies. Dr. Lotfi is passionate about providing patient centered, high quality care working within the multidisciplinary team of experts.

Smilow Head and Neck Cancers Program Welcomes New Surgeons

Suresh Mohan, MD, and Zafar Sayed, MD, have been appointed Assistant Professors of Surgery (Otolaryngology) and will care for patients at Smilow Cancer Hospital through the Head and Neck Cancers Program.

Dr. Mohan received his medical degree from Brown University and completed a one-year research fellowship at the NIH investigating novel small molecule inhibitors for head and neck cancer. He completed a research track residency at Mass Eye and Ear/Harvard Medical School and a fellowship in Facial Plastic and Microvascular Reconstruction at the University of California-San Francisco. His clinical interests include free tissue transfer for head and neck cancer reconstruction, facial paralysis and reanimation, and Mohs reconstruction.

Dr. Sayed completed his medical degree from the Indiana University School of Medicine, his residency in Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at Northwestern University McGaw Medical Center, and a fellowship in ablative head and neck surgical oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Prior to joining Yale, Dr. Sayed led the head and neck surgical oncology team at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE. While there, he served as Director of the head and neck cancer program and chief of Otolaryngology. His clinical interests include head and neck surgery, tumor board, and comprehensive oncology.

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Raising Awareness of Apheresis

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Using an IUD Could Significantly Lower Your Ovarian Cancer Risk

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Smilow Shares: AL Amyloidosis
of the multidisciplinary head and neck tumor board and Principal Investigator for the integrated head and neck tumor repository.

He treats a variety of benign and malignant tumors of the head and neck and has specialization in transoral robotic surgery. His clinical practice focuses on the treatment of advanced skin cancers, aerodigestive tract tumors, salivary gland tumors, thyroid disease, and reconstruction with an emphasis on improving function and decreasing patient morbidity.

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**Notables**

**Veda Giri, MD**, Chief of Clinical Cancer Genetics and Co-Director of the Early Onset Cancer Program at Smilow Cancer Hospital and Yale Cancer Center, and **Lajos Pusztai, MD, DPhil**, Professor of Medicine (Medical Oncology), and Co-Leader of the Genetics, Genomics, and Epigenetics Research Program at Yale Cancer Center, have been named Fellows of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (FASCO). The FASCO distinction honors members of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for their extraordinary volunteer service, commitment, and dedication to the organization. Dr. Giri and Dr. Pusztai were named among 48 recipients nationwide to earn the FASCO designation by ASCO.

**Rachel Greenup, MD, MPH**, Associate Professor of Surgery (Breast Surgery) has been appointed Co-Director of the Center for Breast Cancer. Dr. Greenup is Chief of Breast Surgery and will partner with Maryam Lustberg, MD, MPH, Director of the Center for Breast Cancer, to further the growth and expansion of breast cancer care across the Yale New Haven Health System.

**Barbara Burtness, MD**, Anthony N. Brady Professor of Medicine (Medical Oncology), Chief Translational Research Officer, and Division Chief of Head and Neck Cancers/Sarcoma, has been appointed Co-Chair of the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma Clinical Practice Guideline Committee.

The AACR Special Conference in Cancer Research: Pancreatic Cancer will be held next week in Boston. Yale participation includes **Luisa Escobar-Hoyos, MSc, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Therapeutic Radiology, presenting the Rising Star: Keynote Lecture: “RNA switches in pancreatic cancer: Expression, splicing and RNA-based therapeutics and **Mandar Muzumdar, MD**, Associate Professor of Medicine (Medical Oncology) and Scientific Director of the Center for Gastrointestinal Cancers at Smilow Cancer Hospital and Yale Cancer Center, will present a Plenary Talk: Feeding the Flames of Pancreatic Cancer. **Natasha Pinto Medici, PhD**, postdoctoral associate in the lab of Dr. Escobar-Hoyos, received the Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award to attend and present her work at the conference.

Poster Sessions at the meeting from Yale Cancer Center include:
The Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program welcomes Xin Zhou, PhD, Assistant Professor of Biostatistics. Dr. Zhou conducts methodological research in several biostatistical areas, including measurement error correction in survival data analysis, power and sample size calculation for cluster randomized trials, and statistical methods in precision medicine. He has experience in collaboration studies in cancer epidemiology, has conducted research on measurement error correction, and has expertise in theoretical statistics and survival analysis.

Employee Profile: Brianna Flanagan

Brianna Flanagan, MSN, RN, OCN, has spent her nursing career caring for patients as part of Inpatient Adult Medical Oncology on NP12, as well as with the Oncology Extended Care Clinic. She joined Smilow and Yale as a bedside nurse in 2016, and is currently a Patient Services Manager on the floor.

In her role, Brianna oversees a staff of 80 employees on the 28-bed inpatient unit, mostly caring for patients with solid tumors. The Oncology Extended Care Clinic, which opened in 2017, is a 6-chair unit that provides supportive care and symptom management for patients who need priority medical attention outside of the inpatient setting.
need priority medical attention outside their regular treatment appointments. A current project she and her team are working on is decreasing patient length of stay, and increasing the amount of discharges that occur before 11 AM. She is also focused on quality and safety projects and nursing-sensitive indicators, which are specific patient outcomes that are influenced by nursing care.

“I love working with this patient population, but I think my favorite thing about my job is how close the staff is; it makes for a genuine team environment that patients benefit from as well. We collaborate with and support each other during challenging times,” said Brianna. You don’t find this kind of environment in just any hospital.”

In 2022, Brianna received the Daisy Award for Nurse Leaders, given to nurses who provide above-and-beyond compassionate care to patients and families, and it was the first time a nurse leader was recognized at YNHH. Kim Slusser, RN, MSN, Vice President, Patient Services, commented, “It has been exciting to watch Brianna’s growth as a nursing leader. She truly enjoys leading her team and collaborating with her MD colleagues and the rest of the interdisciplinary team to provide the high quality care to our patients and foster a culture of commitment to one another.”

Recent Publications


Bilateral Breast Cancer with Contralateral Axillary Metastasis Warrants Aggressive Treatment: Let’s Go for It! Mekhtech, M, Knowlton CA. International Journal of Radiation Oncology Biology Physics, Nov. 1 2023 Read More


Tannenbaum SH, Miller JE. Clinical Trial Diversity: A Bend in the Arc Toward Justice. JCO Precis Oncol. 2023 Sep;7:e2300380. Read More


Menon V, Brash DE. Next-Generation Sequencing Methodologies To Detect Low-Frequency Mutations: "Catch Me If You Can". *Mutat Res Rev Mutat Res.* 2023 Sep 14:108471. Read More


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### Funding and Award Opportunities

**The Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network - Core Clinical Centers (UG1 Clinical Trial Optional)**

This NOFO invites applications to participate as Core Clinical Centers and Consortia in the BMT CTN. Core Clinical Centers and Consortia are expected to support and conduct multi-site trials to compare novel treatment approaches and management strategies for children and adults undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HCT) for non-malignant and malignant blood diseases, either alone or in combination with novel adoptive cell-based therapies. **Application Deadline:** October 2, 2023 Read More

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“What is most inspiring is that research has led to cures and has improved the lives of many patients,” said Francine Foss, MD, in a Q&A for Blood Cancer Awareness Month, pointing to a paradigm shift over the last five years towards newer, more patient-friendly treatments including oral therapies, targeted biologics, and immunotherapies.
The Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network - Data Coordinating Center (U24)
This NOFO invites applications to participate as the Data Coordinating Center (DCC) for the BMT CTN. The overall goals are to identify and address gaps in HCT and adoptive cell therapy outcomes for blood diseases; rapidly disseminate study results to improve the scientific basis of the therapies being studied; provide a platform to train emerging clinical trial investigators; build a biorepository for future research that includes specimens linked to clinical data and outcomes from patients with non-malignant blood diseases who receive these therapies; and ultimately improve the life and quality of life for patients with blood diseases who receive HCT or adoptive cell therapies.

Application Deadline: October 2, 2023
Read More

Charles H. Hood Foundation Child Health Research Awards Program
The intent of the Child Health Research Awards Program is to support newly independent faculty, provide the opportunity to demonstrate creativity, and assist in the transition to other sources of research funding.

Application Deadline: October 4, 2023
Read More

Cancer Prevention, Detection, Diagnosis, and Treatment Technologies for Global Health (U01)
This NOFO supports the development of cancer-relevant technologies suitable for use in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Specifically, the NOFO solicits applications for projects to adapt, apply, and validate existing or emerging technologies into a new generation of user-friendly, low-cost technologies for preventing, detecting, diagnosing, and/or treating cancers in people living in LMICs.

Application Deadline: October 13, 2023
Read More

Single Source: Pediatric Early Phase Clinical Trials Network (PEP-CTN; UM1)
Through this non-competitive single source cooperative agreement NOFO, the NCI solicits an application from the Public Health Institute with the intent of funding a single award to continue to support and enhance the Pediatric Early Phase Clinical Trials Network (PEP-CTN) for conducting early phase clinical trials in children with cancer.

Letter of Intent Due: October 15, 2023
Read More

2024 Innovation Awards Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation
The Innovation Grant is designed to provide critical and significant seed funding for researchers with a novel approach to pediatric oncology scientific investigation. Proposals should be hypothesis-driven and innovative. This may represent a change in research direction and/or an innovative idea that moves away from an investigator’s prior research but for which a strong case is made for the potential impact on childhood cancers.

Letter of Intent Deadline: October 16, 2023
Read More

ASCO Conquer Cancer Career Development Award
The Career Development Award (CDA) provides research funding to clinical investigators, who have received their initial faculty appointment, as they work to establish an independent clinical cancer research program. This is a mentored award and the research project is conducted under the guidance of a scientific mentor. The research must have a patient-oriented focus, including a clinical research study and/or translational research involving human subjects.

Application Deadline: October 19, 2023
Read More
Proposals sought: Those that advance our understanding of the health of women and/or the influence of sex and gender on health
Funding opportunities:
Annual Pilot Project Award ($35,000 max) for research designed to meet a clear need in advancing the health of women.
The Wendy U. & Thomas C. Naratil Pioneer Award ($50,000 max) for highly inventive, new research on the health of women designed to achieve a breakthrough, or ongoing research in which funding is needed to achieve a discovery.
Community-Based Research Awards (up to $35,000) for data-driven community-based research designed to advance the health of women as a pathway to economic and social mobility.
Letter of Intent Deadline: Thursday, October 19, 2023
Read More

2024 Pershing Square Sohn Prize for Young Investigators in Cancer Research
The Pershing Square Sohn Prize for Young Investigators in Cancer Research provides greater New York City area-based early career scientists the freedom to take risks and pursue their boldest research at a stage when traditional funding is lacking. As of 2023, Prize winners each receive $250,000 a year for three years, totaling $750,000. At least six prizes are awarded annually.
Letter of Intent Due: October 30, 2023
Read More

Leveraging Social Networks to Promote Widespread Individual Behavior Change (R01)
The purpose of this NOFO is to invite basic observational or experimental behavioral and/or social science R01 applications that test how intrapersonal and interpersonal mechanisms of behavior change interact with, influence, or are influenced by characteristics of social networks, with implications for health. Research supported through this NOFO will examine at least two levels of analysis: interpersonal processes and social network characteristics.
Application Deadline: November 3, 2023
Read More

Investigator-Initiated Research in Genomics and Health Equity (R01)
The purpose of this initiative is to support investigator-initiated research in genomics and health equity, with the ultimate goal of developing approaches, generating and disseminating data, and implementing metrics or interventions that will advance the equitable use of genomics to improve health in U.S. populations.
Application Deadline: November 8, 2023
Read More

ACRA for Diversity and Inclusion in Breast Cancer Research
This award is designed with the primary goal of increasing diversity in the oncology workforce and cancer research. Awards will be given to mid-career investigators who are members of racial and/or ethnic groups traditionally excluded in academic medicine and biomedical research, and who wish to conduct original breast cancer research not currently funded.
Application Deadline: November 16, 2023
Read More

Development of Innovative Informatics Methods and Algorithms for Cancer Research and Management (R21)
The purpose of this FOA is to invite exploratory/developmental research grant applications (R21) for innovative informatics methods and algorithms to improve the acquisition, analysis, visualization, or interpretation of data across the cancer research continuum including cancer biology, cancer treatment and diagnosis, early cancer detection, risk assessment and prevention, cancer control and epidemiology, and/or cancer health disparities.
Application Deadline: November 17, 2023
Early-Stage Development of Informatics Technologies for Cancer Research and Management (U01)
The purpose of this FOA is to invite Cooperative Agreement (U01) applications for the development of enabling informatics technologies to improve the acquisition, management, analysis, and dissemination of data and knowledge across the cancer research continuum including cancer biology, cancer treatment and diagnosis, early cancer detection, risk assessment and prevention, cancer control and epidemiology, and/or cancer health disparities.
Application Deadline: November 17, 2023
Read More

Advanced Development of Informatics Technologies for Cancer Research and Management (U24)
The purpose of this FOA is to invite Cooperative Agreement (U24) applications for advanced development and enhancement of emerging informatics technologies to improve the acquisition, analysis, visualization, and interpretation of data across the cancer research continuum including cancer biology, cancer treatment and diagnosis, early cancer detection, risk assessment and prevention, cancer control and epidemiology, and cancer health disparities.
Application Deadline: November 17, 2023
Read More

Sustained Support for Informatics Technologies for Cancer Research and Management (U24)
The purpose of this FOA is to invite Cooperative Agreement (U24) applications for the continued development and sustainment of high value informatics research resources to improve the acquisition, management, analysis, and dissemination of data and knowledge across the cancer research continuum including cancer biology, cancer treatment and diagnosis, early cancer detection, risk assessment and prevention, cancer control and epidemiology, and cancer health disparities.
Application Deadline: November 17, 2023
Read More

Understanding and Mitigating Health Disparities experienced by People with Disabilities caused by Ableism (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)
The goal of this NOFO is to encourage research to understand the impact of ableism on health outcomes. Research on the underlying mechanisms by which ableism adversely influences the health of persons with disabilities (PWD), as well as developing and/or testing interventions at a community or health systems level to mitigate adverse health effects of ableism are high priority.
Application Deadline: November 29, 2023
Read More

Calendar

New England Hematologic Malignancies Symposium
September 22-23, 12:00 – 5:00 PM
Connecticut Convention Center: 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT
Noffar Bar, MD | John C. Byrd, MD, FACP | Adam D. Cohen, MD | Irene Ghobrial, MD | Elias Jabbour, MD | Eric D. Jacobsen, MD | Shaji K. Kumar, MD | Ann S. LaCasce, MD, MMSc | Alfred Lee, MD, PhD | Sudhanshu Mulay, MD | Gail J. Roboz, MD | Gilles Salles, MD, PhD

Friends for making the day so special.

Congratulations to Veda Giri, MD, @vedangiri and Lajos Pusztai, MD, DPhil, on this special honor!

Research led by @DrRoyHerbstYale suggests that #NC318, both alone and in combination with pembrolizumab, improved response rates and clinical outcomes for some patients with #NSCLC.

Register for a free #prostatecancer screening on Wednesday, Sept. 20 from 5-7pm at @BPTHOSP MedEase Unit.

15 year old Evie of Westport fought #leukemia as a child. Now, as a teenager in remission, she returned to Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital for her @MakeAWishCT wish: to be a #pediatriconcologist. Watch below:

@JeffTownsend shares new research @WTNH on what #cancer treatments are associated with a higher risk of #COVID infection, and what kind of booster schedules might aid those patients.

“Our study suggests that #artificialintelligence has the ability to improve the identification of PD-L1 positive patients by providing a predictive accuracy that was better than manual scoring.”
Yale Cancer Answers
September 24; 7:30PM
WNPR
Robotic Surgery for Lung Cancer
Justin Blasberg, MD
Learn More

Multidisciplinary Portal Hypertension and Vascular Liver Disorders Conference
September 26, 7:30 AM
Location TBA
Todd Schlachter, MD
Learn More

Palliative Care Journal Club
September 26, 12:00 PM
FMP 132
Listening to the Unheard: Community-Based Advance Care Planning
Mary Thomas, MD
Learn More

Palliative Care Case Conference
September 26, 4:00 PM
FMP 618
Balancing Analgesia and Alertness at the End of Life
Caitlin Bennett, MD
Learn More

Endocrine Workshop
September 27 4:00 PM
FMP132
My Approach to Hyperandrogenism in Women (including PCOS)
Clare Flannery, MD
Learn More

Yale Cancer Center and Smilow Cancer Hospital Town Hall
September 27, 5:00 PM
Zoom
Eric Winer, MD | Lori Pickens, MHA | Kevin Billingsley, MD, MBA | Kim Slusser, RN | Michele Kelvey-Albert, MPH | Tara Sanft, MD
Learn More

Therapeutic Radiology Grand Rounds
September 28 9:00 AM
Smilow LL505
Comparative Global Oncology: Cervical
Cancer Treatment in Gabon
Luiza Bett, BS
Learn More

Immunobiology Seminar Series
September 28, 10:30 AM
The Anlyan Center
The determinants of anti-tumor immunity in kidney cancer
David A. Braun, MD, PhD
Learn More

Grand Rounds – Pathology
September 28, 12:30 PM
FMP Auditorium
L. Jeffrey Medeiros, MD
Learn More

Yale’s Review of Advances in Oncology
Highlights from the 2023 ASCO® Annual Meeting
September 29, 7:15 AM
Anthony’s Ocean View, 450 Lighthouse Road, New Haven
Elizabeth Berger, MD, MS; Aarti Bhatia, MD; David Braun, MD, PhD; Sabrina Browning, MD; Michael Cecchini, MD Michael Cohenuram, MD Jacquelyne Gaddy, MD, MS; Sarah Goldberg, MD, MPH; Roy S. Herbst MD, PhD; Scott Huntington, MD, MPH, MS; Michael Hurwitz, MD, PhD; Ariel Jaffe, MD; Patrick Kenney, MD; Sajid Khan, MD, FACS, FSSO; Harriet Kluger, MD; Shalin Kothari, MD; Ian Krop, MD, PhD; John Kunstman, MD, MHS; Pamela Kunz, MD; Jill Lacy, MD; Maryam Lustberg, MD, MPH; David Madoff, MD; Kelsey Martin, MD; Justin Blasberg, MD; Henry Park, MD, MPH; Saral Mehr, MD, MBA; Kelly Olino, MD; Henry Park, MD, MPH; Daniel Petrylak, MD; Mariya Rozenblit, MD; Rory Shallis, MD; Stacey Stein, MD; Mario Strazzabosco, MD; Tamar Taddei, MD; Hal Tara, MD; Thuy Tran, MD, PhD; Kiran Turaga, MD, MPH; Eric Winer, MD; So Yeon Kim, MD; Melissa Young, MD
Learn More

Yale Urology CME Symposium
September 29 – October 1, 7:00 PM
Yale Club of New York City
Bulldog Debates
Isaac Y. Kim, MD, PhD, MBA | Thomas Chi, MD | Dinesh Singh, MD | Piruz Motamedinia, MD Timothy Tran, MD | Daniel S. Kellner, MD | Leslie M. Rickey, MD, MPH | Harris E.
Yale Conference for Alcohol Research and Education (YCARE)
September 30, 8:00 AM
The Anlyan Center
Speakers TBA
Learn More

Yale Cancer Answers
October 1, 7:30 PM
WNPR
Liver Cancer Awareness Month
Stacey Stein, MD
Learn More

Yale Center for Molecular and Systems Metabolism (YMSM)
October 3, 11:00 AM
Brady Memorial Laboratory
A breakdown in mitochondrial endosymbiosis as a cause of inflammatory diseases
Luke O’Neil
Learn More

Virtual Survivorship Series
October 3, 5:30 PM
Greenwich Hospital Care Center
Self-care after breast cancer
Learn More

Genetics Research-In-Progress (RIP)
October 4, 12:00 PM
SHM I-Wing
Shengyan Jin | Mengze Helen He
Learn More

Yale PCCSM Weekly Research Conference
October 5, 12:00 PM
The Anlyan Center
Exploring Nuclear Mechanotransduction in Lung Injury, Repair, and Fibrosis
Megan C. King, PhD
Learn More

Yale Cancer Center Grand Rounds