January 24, 2020

Announcements

Yale Cancer Center Conclave

I was honored to join so many of you and celebrate the Yale Cancer Center Smilow Cancer Hospital community at our annual Conclave on January 13. We continue to excel since the opening of Smilow in 2009, not only in growth, but with new breakthroughs in cancer care. In 2019, we cared for 48% of newly diagnosed patients in Connecticut, and since then we have worked to bring patients in our region the newest immune-oncology treatments, CAR T Cell therapy, and an expanding network of experimental clinical trials. As we begin Smilow’s second decade, I am confident that our universal consenting process and a systemwide biorepository will provide our clinicians and scientists with the additional support they need to continue to expand opportunities for research, and bring us more answers.

As we drive forward our mission, we must not lose sight of the people who make it all possible. There are countless individuals and teams to thank; I am especially pleased to announce the winners of our annual Conclave awards. Individual awards were presented to recognize outstanding achievement in research and clinical care during 2019. Please join me in congratulating the following:

Ruth Halaban, PhD, was presented with the Yale Cancer Center Lifetime Achievement Award by Marcus Bosenberg, MD, PhD. Ruth joined Yale School of Medicine in 1973 and has led Yale’s efforts in the basic and translational biology of
melanoma, including evaluation of the basic biology of pigmentation and seminal studies on the genetics of melanoma. Dr. Halaban led efforts that brought the first SPORE to Yale in 2006, and has helped to ensure two subsequent funding cycles to support melanoma research and clinical trials here. Dr. Bosenberg presented the award to Ruth by saying, "Ruth is a pioneer in melanoma research, has been at the top of her field for a long time, and shows no signs of slowing down." Dr. Halaban accepted the Lifetime Achievement Award with a few short words saying, "Age is only a number!"

The Yale Cancer Center Awards for Excellence in Clinical Care were presented to two outstanding physicians at Smilow Cancer Hospital: Dr. Debra Brandt and Dr. Kevin Kim. Dr. Anne Chiang first recognized Debra Brandt, DO, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine (Medical Oncology) and Medical Director of the Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center at Torrington for her clinical leadership and excellent patient care at the Center in Torrington. "Dr. Brandt is a truly exceptional doctor who advocates for her patients in every way, exhibits compassion and empathy for her patients as a mentor and teacher. We thank her for all she has done for her patients and the community and the high standards and keen intelligence that she brings to all that she does."

Yale Scientists Breach Brain Barriers to Attack Tumors

Join Smilow Cancer Hospital on Facebook

Latest Posts:

Join Dr. Shalin Kothari for a free program on lymphoma to learn about treatment options and research updates, followed by Q&A. Sponsored by the Lymphoma Research Foundation on January 28th at Courtyard by Marriott New Haven.

Dr. Gary Soffer discussed Integrative Medicine and the positive impact it can have for patients going through cancer treatment on Yale Cancer Answers. Tune in to WNPR or download our podcast through iTunes this week.
Dr. Benjamin Judson, Chief Ambulatory Officer for Smilow Cancer Hospital, then presented Kevin Kim, MD, with his award. Dr. Kim is a Professor of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging, Professor of Medicine (Medical Oncology) and Section Chief of Interventional Radiology at YCC and Smilow Cancer Hospital. "Dr. Kim brings an essential level of expertise that our community of physicians and staff reaches out to continuously to take good care of our patients. He is always available and brings exceptional care to several clinical programs in Smilow."

#TBT to the ribbon cutting for Smilow Cancer Hospital 10 years ago! We're so grateful to the physicians, nurses, and caregivers that help to make our hospital great!

Yale Cancer Center is proud to welcome Dr. Farren Isaacs and Dr. Gerald Shulman to its research membership. Dr. Isaacs is focused on developing foundational genomic and biomolecular technologies to probe and enhance the understanding of natural biological systems. With a background in bioengineering, Dr. Isaacs has training and expertise across diverse research areas, which include molecular biology, genomics, computational biology, and molecular engineering.

Dr. Shulman is interested in understanding metabolic dysregulation in cancer, and is expanding his own work in this area. He
The **Ruth McCorkle Advanced Practice Provider Award** was presented by Kim Slusser, MSN, RN, CHPN, NEA-BC, Vice President of Patient Services at Smilow Cancer Hospital, and Vanna Dest, APRN, Senior Program Manager for Advanced Practice at Smilow Cancer Hospital and winner of the award in 2017. Vanna began by sharing reflections and memories of Ruth, the "Godmother of Oncology Nursing," and crediting her with restructuring the APP community at Smilow Cancer Hospital. There will be a dedicated plaque displayed in Smilow to list all of the Ruth McCorkle Advanced Practice Provider Award winners since its inception in 2012.

Kim continued by announcing this year’s award winner, **Raymond Lenox APRN**, an advanced practice provider with the Smilow Stem Cell Transplant Team, in recognition of his commitment to patient-centered care and mentorship. Raymond is an expert in his field and a true role model to others. She shared his forward-thinking mentality with a focus on small moments and interactions that shape and impact his colleagues and patients.

**The Class of '61 Research Prize** was awarded to **Qin Yan, PhD**, Associate Professor of Pathology and a member of Yale Cancer Center’s Genetics, Genomics, and Epigenetics Research Program, with introductory remarks by Dr. Mark Lemmon. Dr. Lemmon recognized Dr. Yan’s leadership in breast cancer epigenetics research and the growth will be an important contributor to the strategic Yale Cancer Center goal of understanding and therapeutically exploiting cancer metabolism.

Dr. Nikolai Podoltsev discussed treatment of Polycythemia Vera (PV), a potentially deadly blood cancer, on Yale Cancer Answers.

Hydroxyurea (HU) is the most commonly used treatment option, but evidence for HU treatment is limited and treatment is unfortunately underused.

Follow Yale Cancer Center on Twitter
Barbara Burtness, MD, and Daniel Petrylak, MD, were each presented with the Yale Cancer Center Clinical Science Research Award. Dr. Burtness is a Professor of Medicine (Medical Oncology), Leader of the Disease Aligned Research Team for Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale New Haven’s Head & Neck Cancers Program and Co-Leader of the Developmental Therapeutics Research Program. She received her award in recognition of her study published in The Lancet titled, "Pembrolizumab alone or with chemotherapy versus cetuximab with chemotherapy for recurrent or metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (KEYNOTE-048): a randomized, open-label, phase 3 study."

Daniel Petrylak, MD, is a Professor of Medicine (Medical Oncology) and of Urology and Co-Leader of the Cancer Signaling Networks Research Program. He received his prize for his study published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology titled, "Pivotal Trial of Enfortumab Vedotin in Urothelial Carcinoma After Platinum and Anti-Programmed Death 1/Programmed Death Ligand 1 Therapy."
Sidi Chen, PhD, was honored with the Yale Cancer Center Basic Science Research Award. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Genetics and Systems Biology Institute at Yale’s West Campus, a member of our Genomics, Genetics, and Epigenetics Research Program, and the Yale Stem Cell Center. Dr. Chen was honored for his work published in three journals, including a study published in *Nature Methods* titled "One-step generation of modular CAR-T cells with AAV-Cpf1."

Lieping Chen, MD, PhD, was presented with the Yale Cancer Center Translational Research Prize.

Dr. Gary Soffer will discuss Integrative Medicine and the positive impact it can have for patients going through cancer treatment on Yale Cancer Answers today at 7:30pm. Tune in to @wnpr or download our podcast through iTunes this week.

Results from clinical trial research by Dr. Jill Lacy and colleagues in @LancetGastroHep shows a promising new treatment option for patients with advanced pancreatic cancer.

#Immunotherapy can be a lifesaving treatment for #cancer, but can cause adverse events. Learn about #ocular immune related events, ocular cancer and the treatments available to control these affects with Dr. Renelle Lim.

New research @Nature led by @VirusesImmunity Dr. Akiko Iwasaki shows how to help the #immune system fight life-threatening #braincancer including #glioblastoma.

@DrRoyHerbstYale attended the annual JP Morgan Healthcare Conference in San Francisco yesterday to discuss #biotech development and #immunoncology.

Dr. Iris Isufi discusses the @SmilowCancer #CARTcell Therapy Program during Grand Rounds, the only CAR T-Cell program in Connecticut to treat certain #bloodcancers for both adults and children.

**Calendar**

Smilow Screening & Prevention Presentation
January 24; 10:30 AM
135 Sylvan Avenue, New Haven
*Cervical Cancer*
Learn More >>
Dr. Chen is the United Technologies Corporation Professor in Cancer Research, a Professor of Immunobiology, of Dermatology and of Medicine (Medical Oncology), and Co-Leader for the Cancer Immunology Research Program. He received the award for his work published in the journal *Nature Medicine* titled, "Siglec-15 as an immune suppressor and potential target for normalization cancer immunotherapy."

Linda Niccolai, PhD, was honored with the Yale Cancer Center Population Science Research Prize. Dr. Niccolai is a Professor in the Department of Epidemiology (Microbial Diseases), the Director of Development Core at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS, the Director of the HPV Working Group, and Co-Director of the Connecticut Emerging Infections Program at Yale. She was honored for her publication in the journal Vaccine titled, "Missed Opportunities for HPV Vaccination Among Vaccine-Eligible Women with High Grade Cervical Lesions."

Yale Cancer Center Seminar
January 24; 12:00 PM
Winchester Building, WWW208
*Contributing Chapters to Trousseau's Tales; Lessons Learnt, Current Endeavors and Future Directions*
Rushad Patell, MBBS, MD
Learn More >>

Yale CBIT Healthcare Hackathon
January 24; 4:00 PM
55 Park Street, Auditorium & Seminar Room
Social Determinants of Health
Learn More >>

Yale Cancer Answers
January 26; 7:30 PM
NPR
*Global Oncology*
Donna Spiegelman, ScD
Learn More >>

Radiobiology and Radiotherapy Research Program
January 27; 11:00 AM
Sterling Hall of Medicine, I-304
*Fingerprints of Fidelity: The Importance of Pre-catalytic Conformational Changes for Nucleotide Selection by DNA Polymerase Beta*
Carlous Fijen, PhD
Learn More >>

Genetics Clinical Grand Rounds
January 28; 10:15 AM
Sterling Hall of Medicine, I-304
Hui Zhang, MD, PhD
Learn More >>

Yale Cancer Center Grand Rounds
January 28; 12:00 PM
55 Park Street, Park Street Auditorium
Noah Palm, PhD and Michael Girardi, MD, FAAD
Learn More >>
NCI Budget Increase
I am pleased to share recent news from the Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), Dr. Norman Sharpless highlighting recent budget increases. With a 5% or $297 million budget increase in fiscal year 2020, the NCI will fund 125 more competing awards than in FY19 and will devote more than $210 million in new funding to support extramural research and training opportunities. In addition, paylines for R01 grants are increasing by 25%, from the 8th percentile in FY19 to the 10th percentile in FY20; R21 grants are increasing from 7th percentile to 9th percentile. Lastly, funding for non-competing grants will be restored to 100%, up from previous 90% levels.

Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Clinic
The Smilow Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Clinic provides comprehensive risk assessment, education, and screening for patients at increased risk of pancreas cancer. Our multidisciplinary expert team of genetic counselors, nurse practitioners, and physicians work together to create a personalized care plan for each patient. Patients with an increased risk can have a consultative visit at the Pancreas Cancer Early Detection Clinic by James Farrell, MBChB, and Susan Chmael, APRN.
Smilow Pain Program
The Smilow Multidisciplinary Pain Program is Co-directed by Donna-Ann Thomas, MD, and Kevin Kim, MD, and is for patients with complex and difficult to manage cancer-related pain. The multidisciplinary team includes experts from Pain Medicine, Interventional Radiology, Palliative Care, and Integrative Medicine specialties to provide integrative pain medicine for patients who suffer from pain as a result of their cancer treatments including radiation, chemotherapy, surgery, and pain caused by the disease itself. Indications include myofascial pain, facial pain, headache, thoracic cage or rib pain, abdominal pain, perineal pain, coccydynia pain, neuropathic pain, joint pain, bursitis, sacroiliac pain, denervation, and opioid intolerance. To refer a patient, call (203) 200-4671, or refer through EPIC.

Notables

Valentina Greco, PhD, Carolyn Walch Slayman Professor of Genetics and a member of Yale Cancer Center’s Cancer Signaling Networks Research Program, has been awarded one of only two Yale Postdoctoral Mentoring Prizes, as well as the Department of Genetics Mentoring Award. Both prizes celebrate the dedication of a faculty member to the growth of their lab members.

Elias Lolis, PhD, Professor of Pharmacology and a member of Yale Cancer Center's Developmental Therapeutics Research Program, has been appointed the inaugural faculty director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA). In this role, Dr. Lolis will report jointly to the Vice Provost for Research and the Deputy Deans in the School of Medicine and will serve as an advocate for postdoctoral issues with faculty and administration.
Earlier this month, after reviewing a patient’s consent and medication checks, Andrea McPherson, RN, a nurse at the Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center in Greenwich, realized the ordered medication did not match the information on the consent form. After reaching out to the ordering physician for clarification, the order was corrected. Andrea’s attention to detail and questioning attitude prevented a medication error, a great catch!

Employee Profile: Bill Mahon

As we celebrate 10 years since the opening of Smilow Cancer Hospital, we want to take time to thank those that make the building a safe and welcoming environment for our patients, doctors, and staff. William (Bill) Mahon, Maintenance Specialist in the Engineering Department at

Yale Center for Immuno-Oncology Presents: HTI Seminar Series
February 4; 4:00 PM
The Anlyan Center, N-203
Ana Anderson
Learn More >>

Yale Cancer Center Seminar
February 5; 12:00 PM
Winchester Building, WWW208
Toward Improved Systemic Treatment of Breast Cancer Brain Metastases
Andrew Seidman, MD
Learn More >>

2019/2020 Immunobiology Seminar Series
February 6; 10:30 AM
The Anlyan Center Auditorium, N-107
Inhibitory Mechanisms in the Tumor Microenvironment
Dr. Dario Vignali
Learn More >>

Pathology Grand Rounds
February 6; 12:30 PM
Fitkin Memorial Pavilion Auditorium, LMP 1094
Molecular Transplant Diagnostics and Why it is Different from Cancer
Michael Mengel, MD
Learn More >>

Cancer Genetics and Prevention Program Seminar
February 6; 2:30 PM
Orchard Medical Center, 107-109
Learn More >>

OB/GYN Grand Rounds
February 6; 4:00 PM
Brady Memorial Auditorium, Lauder Hall
Current and Future Challenges in Assisted Reproduction: Separating Wheat from Chaff
Learn More >>
YNHH, has been at here for 28 years, but has been working in Smilow for the last ten. He knows the building inside and out, and is responsible for the eighth floor down to NP LL, and also some areas of the 55 Park Street building. He is in constant contact with our clinic staff.

For Bill, the technical part of his job is the easy part, fixing light fixtures, moving furniture, and general maintenance tasks; it is the public relations and serving as a presence in the building that he finds most rewarding. "Small things can make a big difference in someone's day, and my job is to take care of those small things," said Bill. "If a patient sees me making a mistake or not acting professionally, that can affect their outlook of the entire operation. I keep this in mind as I go about my tasks and want to provide reassurance that we take pride in the building and how things are maintained."

Recently, Bill saw a patient stumbling in the lobby of Smilow and acted quickly to break their fall as they fainted, just one example of Bill's dedication to the building and the people in it. Carolyn Truini, Operations Coordinator for Smilow Cancer Hospital, commented, "Bill has been diligent in responding to all the needs of the managers and staff. He gets things done! Whether it is repairing chairs or eliminating lighting that is bothersome to a staff member, Bill takes care of it all!"

**Recent Publications**

**Gene therapy in sickle cell disease: Possible utility and impact.**
Curtis, SA, Shah NC
Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine January 2020, 87 (1) 28-29.
[Read More >>](#)

**Assessment of IFNγ responsiveness in patient-derived xenografts.**
Cardenas JJ, Robles-Oteiza C, Politi K.
[Learn More >>](#)
Hypofractionated radiation treatment for breast cancer: The time is now.
Moran MS, Truong PT.
Breast J. 2020 Jan 15.

VEGF-C-driven lymphatic drainage enables immunosurveillance of brain tumours.
Song E, Mao T, Dong H, Boisserand LSB, Antila S, Bosenberg M, Alitalo K, Thomas JL, Iwasaki A.

Diagnostic Value of CT of Chest, Abdomen, and Pelvis in Patients With Solitary and Multiple Brain Lesions.
Rothman RK, Weinreb J, Zuconi W, Malhotra A.

Phase II evaluation of copanlisib, a selective inhibitor of Pi3kca, in patients with persistent or recurrent endometrial carcinoma harboring PIK3CA hotspot mutations: An NRG Oncology study (NRG-GY008).
Gynecol Oncol Rep. 2020 Jan 2;31:100532.

Imaging Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) Activation.
Libby KA, Su X.

Uncovering axes of variation among single-cell cancer specimens.
Frequent loss of mutation-specific mismatch repair protein expression in nonneoplastic endometrium of Lynch syndrome patients.
Wong S, Hui P, Buza N.
Mod Pathol. 2020 Jan 13.

Humanized mice as preclinical models for myeloid malignancies.
Gbyli R, Song Y, Halene S.

Gynecol Oncol. 2020 Jan 7.

Enteric Nervous System-Derived IL-18 Orchestrates Mucosal Barrier Immunity.
Cell. 2020 Jan 9;180(1):50-63.e12.

Beyond Ruxolitinib: Fedratinib and Other Emergent Treatment Options for Myelofibrosis.
Bewersdorf JP, Jaszczur SM, Afifi S, Zhao JC, Zeidan AM.
Analysis of pre- and post-treatment tissues from the SWOG S0800 trial reveals an effect of neoadjuvant chemotherapy on the breast cancer genome.
Read More >>

Genetic susceptibility may modify the association between cell phone use and thyroid cancer: A population-based case-control study in Connecticut.
Read More >>

Funding Opportunities

2020 Yale Cancer Center Team Challenge Award
YCC is pleased to announce the 2020 Team Challenge Award, a new internal grant program focused on advancing the work of teams who seek to address a fundamental research priority that aligns and/or has the potential to successfully extend YCC strategic priorities.
Internal LOI Deadline: February 3, 2020
Internal Application Deadline: April 1, 2020
Learn More >>

Program to Assess the Rigor and Reproducibility of Extracellular Vesicle-Derived Analytes for Cancer Detection (R01)
This FOA encourages research projects that focus on innovative research in the isolation and characterization of extracellular vesicles (EVs) and their cargo for discovery of predictive biomarkers for risk assessment, detection, diagnosis and prognosis of early cancer.
Application Deadline: February 5, 2020
Leukemia Research Foundation: Hollis Brown 
New Investigator Research Grants Program

The Leukemia Research Foundation exclusively funds New Investigator grants for blood cancer research projects that focus on leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and/or MDS.

**Letter of Intent Due:** February 7, 2020

Learn More >>

Innovative Biospecimen Science Technologies for Basic and Clinical Cancer Research (R21)

This FOA solicits grant applications proposing exploratory research projects focused on the early-stage development of highly innovative technologies that improve the quality of the samples used for cancer research or clinical care.

**Application Deadline:** February 21, 2020

Learn More >>

Innovative Molecular and Cellular Analysis Technologies for Basic and Clinical Cancer Research (R21)

This FOA solicits grant applications proposing exploratory research projects focused on the early-stage development of highly innovative technologies offering novel molecular or cellular analysis capabilities for basic or clinical cancer research.

**Application Deadline:** February 21, 2020

Learn More >>

Advanced Development and Validation of Emerging Biospecimen Science Technologies for Basic and Clinical Cancer Research (R33)

This FOA solicits grant applications proposing exploratory research projects focused on further development and validation of emerging technologies that improve the quality of the samples used for cancer research or clinical care.

**Application Deadline:** February 21, 2020

Learn More >>
Advanced Development and Validation of Emerging Molecular and Cellular Analysis Technologies for Basic and Clinical Cancer Research (R33)

This FOA solicits grant applications proposing exploratory research projects focused on further development and validation of emerging technologies offering novel capabilities for targeting, probing, or assessing molecular and cellular features of cancer biology for basic or clinical cancer research.

**Application Deadline:** February 21, 2020

[Learn More >>](#)

NCI Small Grants Program for Cancer Research for Years 2020, 2021, and 2022

This FOA supports small research projects on cancer that can be carried out in a short period of time with limited resources.

**Application Deadline:** February 24, 2020

[Learn More >>](#)

NCI Pathway to Independence Award for Outstanding Early Stage Postdoctoral Researchers (K99/R00)

The purpose of the NCI Pathway to Independence Award for Outstanding Early Stage Postdoctoral Fellows (K99/R00) program is to increase and maintain a strong cohort of new and talented, NCI-supported, independent investigators.

**Application Deadline:** February 26, 2020

[Learn More >>](#)

Human Health Exposure Analysis Resource (HHEAR)

The HHEAR Program enables NCI-funded researchers to integrate environmental exposures into their existing studies by providing access to high-quality, exposure-assessment services, including: state of the art targeted laboratory analysis of biological samples; statistical analysis services; and expert consultation on exposure analysis, study design, and data analysis and interpretation.
Revision Applications for Validation of Biomarker Assays Developed Through NIH-Supported Research Grants (R01)

The purpose of this FOA is to encourage revision applications (formerly called “competing revisions”) from currently funded NCI R01 research projects. The applicants should propose projects that are expected to accelerate the pace of translation of NCI-supported methods/assays/technologies to the clinic.

Application Deadline: February 28, 2020

DoD Breast Cancer Research Program Funding Opportunities FY20

The FY20 Defense Appropriation Act is providing funding to the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) to support innovative, high-impact research with clinical relevance that will accelerate progress to end breast cancer for Service members, Veterans, and the general public.

- **Breakthrough Award Levels 1 and 2** - Letter of Intent Due March 12, 2020
- **Breakthrough Award Level 3** - Preproposal due March 13, 2020
- **Breakthrough Award Level 4** - Preproposal due March 13, 2020
- **Era of Hope Scholar Award** - Letter of Intent due March 12, 2020
- **Innovator Award** - Preproposal due March 13, 2020

Methods and Measurement in Research with Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Populations (R21)

The purpose of this initiative is to support research projects to advance the measurement of constructs relevant to health research with sexual and gender minority (SGM) populations.
Application Deadline: March 13, 2020
Learn More >>

Sontag Foundation Distinguished Scientist Award
This award provides career and research support to early career scientists who demonstrate outstanding promise for making scientific and medical breakthroughs in the field of brain cancer research.
Application Deadline: March 16, 2020
Learn More >>

Co-infection and Cancer (R21 and R01)
The purpose of this FOA is to enhance mechanistic and epidemiologic investigations addressing the roles of co-infection.
Application Deadline (R21): March 17, 2020
Application Deadline (R01): March 6, 2020
Learn More >>

Cancer Research Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship
The CRI Irvington Postdoctoral Fellowship Program supports qualified young scientists at leading universities and research centers around the world who wish to receive training in fundamental immunology or cancer immunology.
Application Deadline: April 1, 2020
Learn More >>