



# AN AACR VIRTUAL EVENT: **EARLY-CAREER HILL DAY**

March 2-3, 2022

**#AACRontheHill**

**AACR** American Association  
for Cancer Research®

**FINDING CURES TOGETHER®**

# WELCOME LETTER



Dear AACR Early-career Hill Day Participants,

Congratulations on your selection for this special virtual event.

We started the AACR Early-career Hill Day in 2016 to provide an opportunity for young scientists to engage in the policy process and advocate for the resources that are so critical for the future of cancer research. Since that inaugural Hill Day, we have seen tremendous interest in the program.

This year's virtual Hill Day brings together 36 participants from across the country, our largest group to date. Collectively, you represent a broad range of specialties and expertise. For some, this will be an introduction to advocating before Congress, while others have previous advocacy experience and can serve as mentors for your colleagues. Regardless of your level of experience, your voice is needed on Capitol Hill.

Your advocacy comes at a crucial time. Over the six-year period from fiscal year (FY) 2015 to FY 2021, Congress increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by nearly 42%. However, we can't take future increases for granted. With many competing priorities, Congress needs to hear what matters to you. It is as important as ever to advocate for strong investments in medical research to provide hope for the millions who are suffering from thousands of different diseases and conditions.

Each of you has an important story to share with your members of Congress and their staff about why you are pursuing a career in cancer research, and how funding for the NIH and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) is particularly important to your current and future work. By making those connections and cultivating relationships with your members of Congress, you can make a lasting impact on our nation's investments in life-saving research.

On behalf of the AACR, thank you for your commitment to advocating for cancer research. I hope this will be one of many opportunities for you to engage with policymakers on issues that are important to you and your fellow early-career scientists. I also encourage you to stay engaged with the AACR through the many events and programs available to you throughout the year.

Best wishes for a successful Hill Day!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Foti".

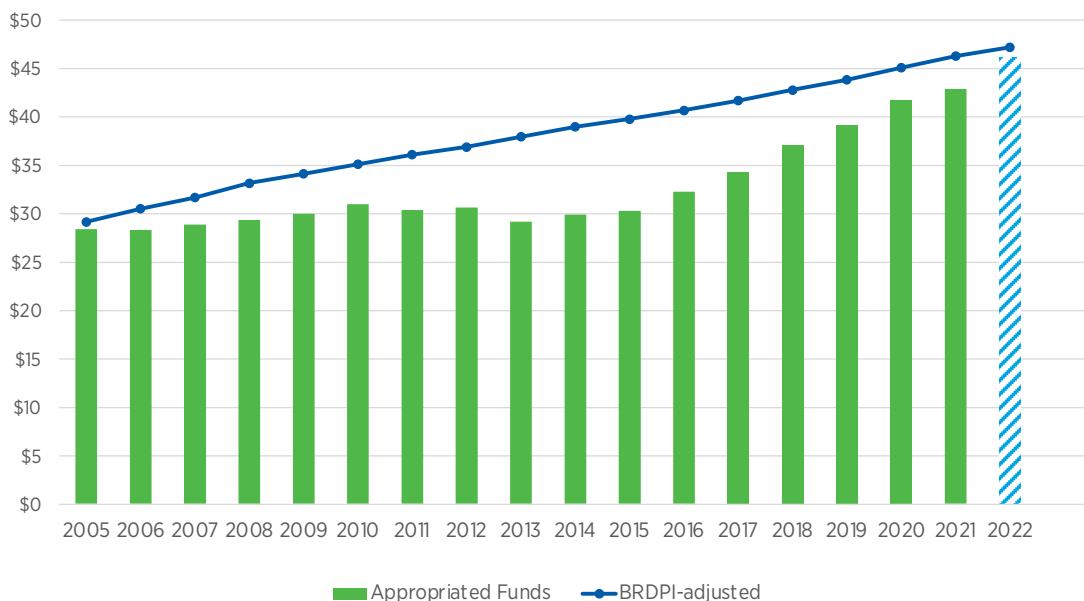
Margaret Foti, PhD, MD (hc)  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Association for Cancer Research

# OVERVIEW



The AACR Early-career Hill Day is an annual event that brings a group of AACR Associate members together to advocate for robust, sustained and predictable funding for cancer research and biomedical science through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), on behalf of early-career cancer researchers. Over the course of more than 50 total congressional visits during a single day, participants are able to stress how important it is to invest in the future of cancer research and provide their own personal perspectives as the investigators whose careers may be most impacted by the support of this essential funding. Participants receive training and support from AACR staff and learn from the experiences of their fellow early-career scientists. This event is an important opportunity for the AACR's Associate members to engage in advocacy at the federal level and educate lawmakers on the progress and promise in cancer research.

## NIH Funding (in billions)



- After years of stalled investments, funding for NIH has not kept up with inflation since FY 2005 (see blue line on chart representing the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index, or BRDPI).
- Thanks to the support of advocates and our champions in Congress, there has been a bipartisan movement to make medical research a national priority, and funding for NIH has increased by \$12.62 billion, or nearly 42%, from FY 2015 to FY 2021.
- Due to this strong support, NIH funding is nearing its buying power from 2005, but more work remains.
- NIH received an increase of \$1.25 billion in the FY 2021 appropriations bill.
- We will advocate for Congress to complete its FY 2022 appropriations bills and ask for an increase of \$3.5 billion for the NIH, the level passed by the House.

# PROGRAMS



## VIRTUAL RECEPTION

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. EST

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

**Brandon Leonard, MA**

Associate Director of Congressional Relations, AACR  
Washington, DC

### National Cancer Institute (NCI) Training and Career Development Programs

**Oliver Bogler, PhD**

Director, Center for Cancer Training, National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland

### NCI Congressional Relations Perspective

**M.K. Holohan Quattrocchi, JD**

Director, Office of Government and Congressional Relations,  
National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland

**Holly Aprea Gibbons, MPP**

Deputy Director, Office of Government and Congressional Relations,  
National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland

### Review of Message and Materials

**AACR Office of Science Policy and Government Affairs Staff**

### Advice from Returning Participants

**AACR Early-career Hill Day Alumni**

### Small Group Preparations and Networking

## PROGRAMS *(cont'd)*

### VIRTUAL HILL DAY PROGRAM

Thursday, March 3, 2022

12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. EST

#### Welcome and Opening Remarks

**David A. Tuveson, MD, PhD, FAACR**

President, American Association for Cancer Research 2021-2022 Director and Roy J. Zuckerman Professor of Cancer Research  
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Cancer Center  
Cold Spring Harbor, New York

#### Greetings from the National Cancer Institute (NCI)

**Norman E. "Ned" Sharpless, MD**

Director, National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland

#### Congressional Remarks

**The Honorable Debbie Dingell**

U.S. Representative for Michigan's 12th Congressional District  
Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce

#### Early-career Hill Day Alumna Perspective

**Melody Tan, PhD**

IEEE-USA/AAAS Congressional Science & Fellow  
Washington, DC

#### AACR Associate Member Engagement

**Kristin G. Anderson, PhD**

Chairperson, AACR Associate Member Council  
Research Associate, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center  
Seattle, Washington

#### Reminders and Follow-up Activities

**AACR Office of Science Policy and Government Affairs Staff**



## SPEAKERS



### **Dana Acton, JD**

Dana Acton is the Director, Science Policy and Legislative Affairs for the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). Dana previously worked for more than a decade in the office of Rep. Nita M. Lowey. Chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee. From 2015-2020, she served as Legislative Director and the Chairwoman's point person on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, handling investments in medical research and public health. Dana is a graduate of American University and Rutgers School of Law, and was a Henry J. Raimondo Legislative Fellow at the Eagleton Institute of Politics.



### **Kristin G. Anderson, PhD**

AACR associate member, Kristin G. Anderson, is a Research Associate in the Clinical Research Division at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Immunology Department at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA. As a breast cancer survivor, she aspires to a translational research career developing cutting-edge cancer therapies. Her research focuses on innovative approaches for treating solid tumors with adoptive T cell therapy. Currently, she is developing molecular engineering strategies to improve tumor-killing by genetically modified T cells, with the ultimate goal of translating her findings into safe and effective treatments for ovarian cancer patients.



## SPEAKERS *(cont'd)*



### **Oliver Bogler, PhD**

Oliver studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge University, completed his PhD at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research in London and did postdoctoral training at the Salk Institute, and the Ludwig Institute, San Diego. He held faculty appointments at Virginia Commonwealth University, Henry Ford Hospital and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center where he also served as director of basic research for the Brain Tumor Center. His work focused on EGFR signaling and novel platinum compounds in glioblastoma. In 2010, he became MD Anderson's Vice President for Global Academic Programs supporting a network of 35 Sister Institutions in 22 countries and fostered cancer research and training across the globe. In 2011, he was also appointed Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, stewarded MD Anderson's education mission and accreditation, and oversaw 300 people, who supported 1,700 faculty and more than 2,000 trainees and students. In 2018 he became COO at the ECHO Institute at the University of New Mexico and helped democratize scarce expert knowledge to improve services to the underserved in healthcare, education and beyond. In 2020 Oliver joined the National Cancer Institute's Center for Cancer Training which supports the goal of training cancer researchers for the 21st century.



### **The Honorable Debbie Dingell**

Congresswoman Dingell represents Michigan's Twelfth Congressional District, which she has served since first being elected in 2015. The Twelfth District stretches from the western suburbs of Detroit to Ann Arbor, which is home to the University of Michigan's Rogel Cancer Center, one of two NCI-designated cancer centers located in the state.

Congresswoman Dingell is a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and serves on the committee's Health Subcommittee, whose broad issue portfolio includes biomedical research and development as well as oversight of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Congresswoman Dingell has been a fervent supporter of NIH and is a champion for biomedical research. She has been a staunch advocate for increased federal funding for women's health research, and is the primary sponsor of the "Access to Breast Cancer Diagnosis Act of 2021", which would lower the costs for breast cancer diagnostic examinations.

## SPEAKERS *(cont'd)*



### **Holly Aprea Gibbons, MPP**

Holly came to NCI as a Presidential Management Fellow in 2009, and joined NCI's Office of Government and Congressional Relations permanently in 2011. She has served as Deputy Director of the office since 2016.

Holly has worked in the health policy and government relations fields for the past twenty years, focusing on tobacco prevention and public health policy, youth civic engagement, and cancer research. Prior to NCI she worked at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and consulted for the American Cancer Society.

Holly is an alumna of American University and the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs.



### **Marc B. Johnson, MPP**

Marc Johnson is the Senior Manager of Congressional Relations for the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). Marc brings a wealth of Capitol Hill experience to this position, having worked with multiple congressional offices and committees. Most recently, he served as Clerk for the House Committee on Homeland Security. He has previously worked in the offices of Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton and former Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick, as well as for the House Committee for Oversight and Reform and the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives. Marc also has consulting experience in both health and IT policy. He received a BA in Political Science from Virginia Commonwealth University and an MA in Public Policy from New England College.



## SPEAKERS *(cont'd)*



### **Brandon Leonard, MA**

Brandon Leonard is the Associate Director of Congressional Relations at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). In this role, he manages the AACR's advocacy activities before Congress in support of increased federal funding for cancer research and legislation that will benefit those who are living with cancer. He has planned and led numerous advocacy events, including the annual Rally for Medical Research, which brings the entire medical research community together in support of funding for the National Institutes of Health. Prior to his current position, Brandon served as Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at Men's Health Network, leading the organization's policy and advocacy activities. He previously worked at the Foundation for Sustainable Development and in the Office of the Governor of Virginia. Brandon received his MA in International Development Studies from the George Washington University and his BA in Foreign Affairs and Spanish from the University of Virginia.



### **M.K. Holohan Quattrocchi, JD**

M.K. Holohan is the Director of NCI's Office of Government and Congressional Relations, a position she has held since 2016. M.K. joined NCI's congressional relations office nearly 12 years ago after serving as a Senior Advisor for Legislative Affairs at the National Human Genome Research Institute. She also brings prior experience as a practicing attorney and as a clinical research coordinator to her work at NCI.

M.K. is an alumna of the University of Maryland School of Law and St. Mary's College.



### **Kevin Schultze**

Kevin Schultze has been working directly with advocates and Capitol Hill staff for more than 14 years, following 15 years as an Emmy-nominated television news reporter, which prepared him to work quickly and efficiently with both lawmakers and associations. He oversees the Congressional Relations department at Soapbox. Kevin has facilitated the growth of client lobby days and site visits for clients including the Human Rights Campaign, Goodwill Industries International, United Way Worldwide and Easter Seals. Kevin is a graduate of James Madison University and holds a Masters Certificate from George Washington University.

## SPEAKERS *(cont'd)*



### **Norman E. “Ned” Sharpless, MD**

A distinguished leader and innovator, Dr. Sharpless is known for his seminal studies of the relationship between tumor suppressor activation, cell cycle control, cellular senescence and molecular aging. By tracking expression of the p16INK4 (or CDKN2a) tumor suppressor in human tissues, Dr. Sharpless demonstrated that p16INK4a activation represents a key biomarker and effector of cellular aging. Dr. Sharpless is further credited with engineering the p16LUC knock-in mouse model, which allows for in vivo visualization of p16INK4a activation, showing that activation of this tumor suppressor is a common early event in both the malignant and stromal compartments of nascent tumors. Based on his work, the p16INK4a biomarker has become one of the most commonly used in vivo tools to mark senescent cells, whose depletion by genetic means (‘senolysis’) in murine models leads to the amelioration of age-associated pathologies and lifespan extension.

His work has also contributed to the understanding of cellular senescence in the context of tumorigenesis. He has demonstrated a connection between the failure of discrete stem cell compartments to senesce, resulting in cancer onset, and providing mechanistic insights into the process of spontaneous tumorigenesis. More recently, he has uncovered that chemotherapy treatment can induce pro-inflammatory senescence in both murine models and human patients, and has proposed the measure of the burden of senescent cells in vivo as a means to quantify physiological age. This idea has led to a biomarker of molecular aging that has been tested as a predictor of age-associated toxicity from various types of therapy in over 1,000 human patients with cancer and non-malignant disease.

He also developed the use of cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitors to induce transient inhibition of proliferation in somatic and progenitor cell compartments, thereby rendering these cells resistant to DNA damaging agents such as cytotoxic chemotherapy and ionizing radiation. This concept of “pharmacological quiescence” has since been employed to produce robust protection of the bone marrow in mammalian models and patients receiving DNA damaging agents as therapy for cancer. In addition to his research efforts, Dr. Sharpless is a visionary entrepreneur, having founded two clinical stage biotechnology companies that aim to reduce the burden of suffering in patients with cancer. Notably, and most recently in October of 2017, the President appointed him the 15th Director of the National Cancer Institute.

## SPEAKERS *(cont'd)*



### **Melody Tan, PhD**

Melody Tan earned her PhD in Bioengineering from Rice University, where her research leveraged optical imaging to improve oral cancer detection. She received her BS in Bioengineering from Rice University and her MSE in Bioengineering Innovation and Design from Johns Hopkins University. Melody has been actively involved with voter outreach and grassroots campaigns, and worked with Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy to address vaccine misconceptions presented in state legislative hearings. In 2019, she was selected as a Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Fellow with the Board on Health Care Services at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Melody subsequently created several initiatives equipping early-career scientists and engineers to engage with policymakers in Texas. She is currently an IEEE-USA / AAAS Congressional Science & Engineering Fellow working on health policy in the Senate.



### **David A. Tuveson, MD, PhD, FAACR**

Dr. Tuveson is the Director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Cancer Center in Cold Spring Harbor, New York, where he is also the Roy J. Zuckerberg Professor of Cancer Research. He is the Chief Scientist for the Lustgarten Foundation in Woodbury, New York, the largest pancreatic cancer research philanthropy. He also serves on the Board of Scientific Advisors of the National Cancer Institute.

Dr. Tuveson is a world-renowned physician-scientist whose basic and translational research focuses on increasing our understanding of the biology of pancreatic cancer and on identifying and testing new approaches for diagnosing and treating the disease. Dr. Tuveson has been recognized with a host of honors and awards throughout his career. Most recently, he was elected to the 2020 class of Fellows of the AACR Academy.

Dr. Tuveson is a fervent advocate for federal funding of cancer research. In May of 2021, he testified on the importance of increased federal investments in cancer research before the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.

# ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS



## **Kristin A. Altwegg, MS**

**Doctoral Candidate**  
**UT Health San Antonio**  
**Texas**

Kristin Ann Altwegg is currently a 4th-year student in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences-Cancer Biology Program at UT Health San Antonio and Affiliate Member of the UT MD Anderson/Mays Cancer Center, San Antonio, TX. She is committed to improving our understanding of breast and gynecologic cancers with a goal of developing next-generation translational cancer therapeutics and prevention interventions to positively enhance disease-free interval and survival outcomes. Her research is dedicated to uncovering the mechanistic contributions of oncogenes, epigenetics, and hormonal signaling spearheaded toward the development of novel translational advances in women's cancer therapeutics. (She also fosters rescue dogs!)

**Email:** [altwegg@livemail.uthscsa.edu](mailto:altwegg@livemail.uthscsa.edu)



## **Talha E. Anwar, MD, PhD**

**Internal Medicine Resident (PGY-2)**  
**University of Michigan**  
**Michigan**

Talha Anwar, MD, PhD is a graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School. He is currently in the Physician-Scientist Training Program at the University of Michigan Health Center and plans on pursuing fellowship in Hematology/Oncology. His research interests are in understanding how changes in the epigenome contribute to cancer progression. He is also interested in ways to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in physician scientist and residency training programs.

**Email:** [tanwar@med.umich.edu](mailto:tanwar@med.umich.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*

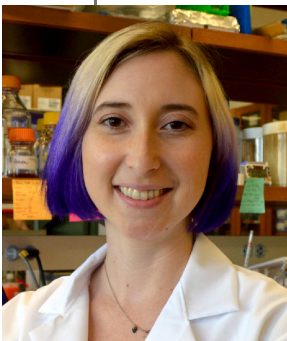


### **Kilan Ashad-Bishop, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Fellow  
University of Miami  
Florida**

Dr. Kilan C. Ashad-Bishop (she/her) is a proud alumna of Morgan State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology, and the University of Miami, where she earned her PhD in Cancer Biology. Currently a Cancer Disparities and Equity Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Miami-based Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, Kilan uses research to advocate for equity and inclusion in health, science, and society and the responsibility of science (and scientists) to advance positive social change. Her current research focuses on the impact of social factors such as housing on cancer disparities.

**Email:** [k.ashadbishop@gmail.com](mailto:k.ashadbishop@gmail.com)



### **Jessie Brown, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Columbia University Medical Center  
New York**

Dr. Jessie Brown was born in Tucson, Arizona where she attended the University of Arizona for her undergraduate studies. She then moved to NYC and attended graduate school at New York University and completed her PhD thesis on quiescence and chemoresistance in squamous carcinomas in the laboratory of Dr. Markus Schober at the Vilcek Institute of Graduate Biomedical Sciences. Today, she works in the lab of Dr. Adolfo Ferrando at Columbia University in the Institute for Cancer Genetics as the Candy and William Raveis Fellow of the Damon Runyon-Sohn Foundation Pediatric Cancer Award on therapeutic resistance in relapsed pediatric leukemias.

**Email:** [jab2451@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:jab2451@cumc.columbia.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Katie M. Campbell, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Fellow**  
**University of California, Los Angeles**  
**California**

Dr. Campbell is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles, and her research is focused on using sequencing technologies and bioinformatics to understand immunotherapeutic opportunities in melanoma. By studying clinical trial biopsies, we can use molecular information about a patient's tumor to understand why they are or are not responding to treatment. This advances our ability to more precisely and successfully treat patients.

**Email:** [KatieCampbell@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:KatieCampbell@mednet.ucla.edu)



### **En Cheng, MD, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Fellow**  
**Kaiser Permanente Northern California**  
**California**

Dr. Cheng is a postdoctoral trainee in the Division of Research at Kaiser Permanente Northern California. Motivated by improving the impact of cancer control and population science, he is dedicated to promoting the adoption and integration of cancer research findings into everyday practice and public health settings to improve the health and health care of the population. His current research is focusing on investigating the long-term outcomes of multiple major cancers among men and women in the United States, and how to improve their survivals via different clinical and lifestyle interventions.

**Email:** [en.cheng@kp.org](mailto:en.cheng@kp.org)



## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*

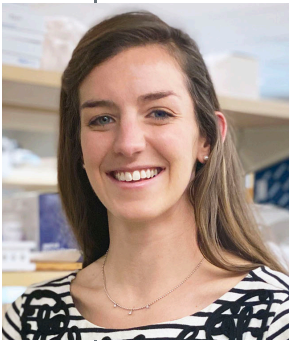


### **Kyle A. Cottrell, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Research Scholar  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Missouri**

Dr. Cottrell received his PhD in Molecular Cell Biology from Washington University in St. Louis (WUSTL). His dissertation research focused on regulation of gene expression by microRNAs and RNA binding proteins. He is currently a NIH/NIGMS Ruth Kirschstein F32 Postdoctoral Fellow at the WUSTL School of Medicine. An RNA biologist by training, Dr. Cottrell is interested in dysregulation of post-transcriptional control of gene expression in cancer. He currently studies translational reprogramming upon loss of tumor suppressors, and the role of RNA editing in breast cancer.

**Email:** cottrellka@wustl.edu



### **Haddie DeHart, BA**

**PhD Student  
Indiana University  
Indiana**

Haddie DeHart is a third-year PhD student in the Cell, Molecular and Cancer Biology Program at Indiana University. Her research is focused on a cancer specific protein named tGLI1, which promotes tumor progression and is linked to poor patient survival. The goal of her work is to elucidate the nature of this protein in glioblastoma, the deadliest form of brain cancer in adults. Before beginning her PhD, she graduated from Rollins College in 2015 and lived in Boston, Massachusetts where she worked for Foundation Medicine and Brigham and Women's Hospital.

**Email:** hkdehart@iu.edu

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Gino M. Dettorre, M Phil**

**Medical Student**

**Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis  
Missouri**

Gino Dettorre is a medical student at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis with basic and clinical research interests in hematology-oncology. Having completed a Master of Research degree at Imperial College London with a thesis focusing on validation of biomarkers for predicting severity of COVID-19 in patients with cancer, Gino presented his work at the AACR COVID-19 and Cancer Meeting and the AACR Annual Meeting 2021. He conducts bench research under Dr. Timothy J. Ley, investigating the epigenetics of acute myeloid leukemia, while continuing research on COVID-19 and cancer. He plans to pursue a career as a physician-scientist.

**Email:** [d.gino@wustl.edu](mailto:d.gino@wustl.edu)



### **Steven D. Forsythe, MS**

**Graduate Researcher**

**Wake Forest School of Medicine  
North Carolina**

Steven D. Forsythe is currently attending the Wake Forest School of Medicine for a doctorate in Cancer Biology. His project is to develop new preclinical models for appendiceal cancer and understand potential predictive markers for therapies in clinical trials. He has also worked to model other rare cancers and develop healthy organoid models for testing potentially toxic compounds. His previous degrees include a MS from Wake Forest University and a BS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is originally from Wisconsin.

**Email:** [sforsyth@wakehealth.edu](mailto:sforsyth@wakehealth.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Lara Franceschinis Tshering, MS**

**Graduate Research Assistant  
Stony Brook University  
New York**

Born in New York but raised abroad, Lara takes pride in her multi-cultural heritage and upbringing. After undergraduate studies in pre-medicine at Sarah Lawrence College, Lara pursued her interest in research through a Master's in Biomedical Sciences at Stony Brook University. She followed this by joining the Molecular & Cellular Pharmacology PhD Program where she studies intratumor heterogeneity in castration resistant models of prostate cancer in Dr. Flaminia Talos' lab at Stony Brook Cancer Center. Lara's work utilises novel technologies with the ultimate goal of developing therapies that block the emergence of treatment resistance, preventing cancer relapse and advanced disease.

**Email:** [lara.franceschinistsheri@stonybrook.edu](mailto:lara.franceschinistsheri@stonybrook.edu)



### **Takeo Fujii, MD**

**Medical Oncology Fellow  
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory/Northwell Health Cancer Institute  
New York**

Takeo Fujii, MD, MPH is a medical oncology fellow in translational research track at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory/Northwell Health Cancer Institute program who work on a basic translational research to find therapeutic targets to breast cancer brain metastasis. He received his MD from the Shinshu University in Japan and his MPH from the University of Texas Houston and completed an internship at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan, medicine residency and medical oncology fellowship in Japan. His motivation to help patients with cancer led him to Internal Medicine Residency at the University of Hawaii which he completed in 2016.

**Email:** [fujii@cshl.edu](mailto:fujii@cshl.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Atieh Hajirahimkhan, PhD**

**ACS Postdoctoral Fellow  
Northwestern University  
Illinois**

Dr. Atieh Hajirahimkhan obtained her B.Sc. in Chemistry followed by a M.Sc. in Biochemistry and a PhD in Medicinal Chemistry with a focus on breast cancer prevention from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Currently, she is an American Cancer Society postdoctoral fellow in Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University. She is passionate about cancer research and have been involved with advocacy programs for increase in research funding. As a registered voter and a female scientist, she would like to directly communicate with government officials to further bring the importance of sustained research funding to their attention.

**Email:** [atieh.hajirahimkhan@northwestern.edu](mailto:atieh.hajirahimkhan@northwestern.edu)



### **Sunil K. Joshi, PhD**

**MD/PhD Student  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Oregon**

Sunil K. Joshi was born and raised in Northern California. Currently, he is a MD/PhD student in Oregon Health & Science University's Medical Scientist Training Program. He completed his PhD research in Dr. Brian J. Druker's laboratory with Drs. Cristina E. Tognon and Elie Traer serving as co-mentors. His dissertation research was focused on characterizing transforming mutations that potentially drive hematologic neoplasms and examining the role of the bone marrow microenvironment in the relapse of leukemia. Ultimately, Sunil is passionate about empowering and advocating for patients from underserved and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities through clinical practice, scientific research, and education.

**Email:** [joshi.sunil4@gmail.com](mailto:joshi.sunil4@gmail.com)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Emilee N. Kotnik, BS**

**PhD Candidate**  
**Washington University in St. Louis**  
**Missouri**

Emilee is a 5th year PhD Candidate in the Molecular Genetics and Genomics program at Washington University in St. Louis. Her thesis work, in the laboratory of Dr. Katherine Fuh, focuses on the genetics of ovarian cancer metastasis. Emilee has served as president of her school's science policy group, ProSPER, and as the Central Hub Regional Co-Chair for the National Science Policy Network (NSPN). She received her undergraduate degree in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Michigan and grew up in Ohio.

**Email:** [ekotnik@wustl.edu](mailto:ekotnik@wustl.edu)



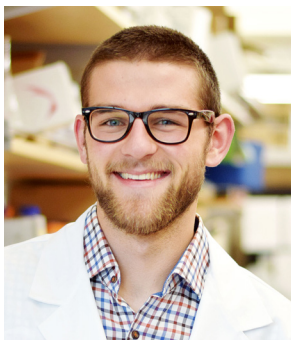
### **Kimiko L. Krieger, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Associate**  
**Baylor College of Medicine**  
**Texas**

Kimiko L. Krieger, PhD is an Associate Member of the AACR and a Postdoctoral Associate at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. She is originally from Jonesboro, GA, a suburb of the Atlanta metropolitan area. Kimiko's research involves studying metabolic alterations driving prostate cancer disparities in African American men. In the future, she plans to pursue a career in academia as independent investigator focused on the molecular underpinnings driving cancer health disparities and the development of research and community outreach initiatives in her community.

**Email:** [kimiko.krieger@bcm.edu](mailto:kimiko.krieger@bcm.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Ian C. Lock, BA**

**PhD Candidate  
Duke University  
North Carolina**

Ian C. Lock is a third-year graduate student in the Molecular Cancer Biology program at Duke University. As a childhood cancer survivor, his interest in cancer research and patient advocacy began in earnest in high school. As a bench scientist his work could contribute to cancer treatment in a few years, however people in his community and around the country face barriers to care and healthy living every single day. He hopes to continue his efforts at the intersection of community and legislative action and scientific endeavors towards healthier and more equitable places to live.

**Email:** [ian.lock@duke.edu](mailto:ian.lock@duke.edu)



### **Clare Malone, PhD**

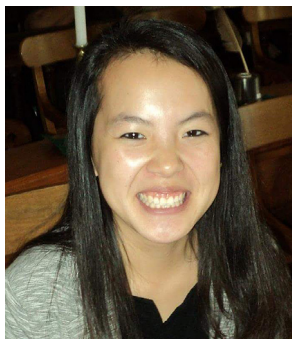
**Postdoctoral Fellow  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute  
Massachusetts**

Clare is a postdoctoral fellow in the pediatric oncology department at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, where she works on identifying new therapeutic targets in neuroblastoma, a pediatric cancer. Clare received her PhD in Genetics from Harvard University. She also earned a certificate from the Leder Program in Human Biology and Translational Medicine. At Harvard, Clare worked on developing novel combination therapies for malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors (MPNSTs).

**Email:** [clare\\_malone@dfci.harvard.edu](mailto:clare_malone@dfci.harvard.edu)



## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Bailey A. Martin-Giacalone, BS**

**PhD Candidate**  
**Baylor College of Medicine**  
**Texas**

Bailey Martin-Giacalone (she/her) is a fourth-year PhD candidate in the Translational Biology and Molecular Medicine program at Baylor College of Medicine. Her research aims to enhance treatment protocols for children with rhabdomyosarcoma by identifying genetic factors that are associated with poor survival for these children. Bailey is the president of the Houston Science Policy and Advocacy Group, where she leads a group of trainees in creating shared, community-based approaches to scientific understanding, communication, and policy.

**Email:** [martingi@bcm.edu](mailto:martingi@bcm.edu)



### **Grace A. McCarthy, BA**

**PhD Candidate**  
**Oregon Health & Science University**  
**Oregon**

AACR associate member, Grace McCarthy, is a fifth-year graduate student in the Cancer Biology Program at Oregon Health & Science University. Her research investigates a novel role of the RNA-binding protein HuR in the pancreatic tumor microenvironment. She also works closely with the company Code Bio in developing a Nanocarrier that delivers treatments directly to pancreatic tumors. Grace is passionate about science communication and is a strong advocate aiming to cultivating diverse, equitable, and safe environments in research. After completing her doctorate, her career goals are to improve public health through science-based policy implementation.

**Email:** [mccarthg@ohsu.edu](mailto:mccarthg@ohsu.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Bhalchandra Mirlekar, PhD**

**Scientist**

**St. Jude Children Research Hospital**

**Tennessee**

Dr. Bhalchandra Mirlekar is an immunologist with a deep and long-lasting interest in how body's immune response shapes cancer and tumor-microenvironment. He is addressing the role of B cells in regulating anti-tumor immunity in pancreatic cancer, with developing new immune-based therapy options for this deadly malignancy. His pre-clinical studies show blockade of IL-35 producing B cells makes pancreatic tumor more responsiveness towards immune-checkpoint blockade therapy. Therefore, his current research focused on design of combinatory therapeutic biologicals such as anti-IL-35 with anti-PD-1 or anti-CTLA-4 cancer immunotherapy along with biomarkers of response to therapy for effective and better treatment of pancreatic cancer patients.

**Email:** rahul007mirlekar@gmail.com



### **Gadisti Aisha N. Mohamed, MS**

**PhD Candidate**

**Dartmouth College**

**New Hampshire**

Gadisti Aisha N. Mohamed's interest in science began after hearing stories of Dolly, the first cloned mammal. She too dreamed of being a scientist, as they had the best job, making amazing discoveries and doing seemingly impossible things. This dream has allowed her to study a lot of cool things: microbiology and RNA trans-splicing as an undergrad at the National University of Singapore, biochemistry of breastmilk as an intern at the University of Western Australia, and haemato-oncology as a Masters student at Queen Mary University of London. Currently, she is a PhD student studying breast cancer heterogeneity at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

**Email:** fnu.gadisti.aisha.nurulhijjah.binti.mohamed.gr@dartmouth.edu

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Golnaz Morad, DDS, PhD**

**NIH/NCI Ruth Kirschstein Postdoctoral Fellow  
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Texas**

Dr. Golnaz Morad is an NIH/NCI Ruth Kirschstein Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and a member of the AACR Associate Member Council. Through basic and translational research, she aims to understand the early mechanisms underlying tumor metastasis, in particular the spread of tumor cells to the brain. She conducted her PhD studies at Harvard University under the supervision of Dr. Marsha Moses, where she studied the role of extracellular vesicles in breast cancer brain metastasis development. Currently, in the laboratory of Dr. Jennifer Wargo, she is studying the role of the microbiome in brain metastasis formation, with the goal of translating her findings into minimally invasive diagnostic and therapeutic strategies.

**Email:** [golnaz.morad@gmail.com](mailto:golnaz.morad@gmail.com)



### **Samuel C. Okpechi, BS**

**Graduate Research Assistant  
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center,  
School of Medicine, New Orleans  
Louisiana**

Samuel Chukwudi Okpechi is a first generation graduate student at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. He is a PhD candidate in the department of biochemistry and molecular biology. Samuel graduated from Southern University at New Orleans with a B.Sc. in Biological Sciences and was the valedictorian of the class of 2016. As an undergraduate, Samuel participated in multiple biomedical and clinical translational internship programs. As a graduate student, his research endeavor is centered on identifying and characterizing potent drug compounds for the treatment of breast cancer. Samuel has authored several peer-reviewed and cancer-related research articles.

**Email:** [sokpec@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:sokpec@lsuhsc.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Rebecca E. Parker, BS**

**PhD Candidate**  
**Emory University**  
**Georgia**

Rebecca E. Parker started working in cancer research in 2014 at Virginia Commonwealth University's Massey Cancer Center, working in a translational lab finding therapies for adult hematologic malignancies. In 2017, she moved to Atlanta's Emory University, working in a lab developing a tyrosine kinase inhibitor, now in clinical trials, for use in pediatric malignancies and lung cancer. In 2019, she joined Emory's Cancer Biology graduate program where her research focuses on the basic biology of KRAS/LKB1-mutant lung cancer, with the goal of finding exploitable vulnerabilities to improve treatment of this aggressive disease.

**Email:** [repar2@emory.edu](mailto:repar2@emory.edu)



### **Rebekah M. Peplinski, BS**

**Graduate Research Assistant**  
**University of Iowa**  
**Iowa**

Rebekah Peplinski is a graduate student at the University of Iowa studying cancer genetics in the research lab of Dr. Adam Dupuy. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse, where a research experience in breast cancer therapeutics has led to a life passion of eradicating disease. At the University of Iowa, Rebekah collaborates with scientists and clinicians to unravel the complexities of ovarian cancer and the evolution of therapeutic resistance. Her research aims to directly impact the lives of patients through the development of more effective treatment regimens and the prevention of recalcitrant disease.

**Email:** [rebekah-peplinski@uiowa.edu](mailto:rebekah-peplinski@uiowa.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Margaret S. Pichardo, MPH**

**MD/PhD Student**  
**Howard University**  
**District of Columbia**

Margaret is in her final year of MD and PhD degrees at Howard College of Medicine & Yale School of Public Health. She studies the link between the social neighborhood environment, lifestyle behaviors and cancer risk and outcomes. She uses translational research with various types of data to identify structural and interpersonal modifiable risk factors to inform cancer prevention policy and interventions. Her work aims to shift the perspective from a model that places the onus on the individual to adopt healthy lifestyles to a model that identifies upstream factors responsible for individuals' inability to engage and maintain healthful lifestyles.

**Email:** Margaret.s.pichardo@gmail.com



### **Enrique I. Ramos, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Research Associate**  
**Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso**  
**Texas**

The focus of Enrique's current research is on expression analysis of long non-coding RNAs in breast cancer and its application as novel biomarkers and potential therapeutic targets. Previously, he was part of a research team focused on the genomic characterization of rare pediatric central nervous system diseases. As a graduate student, he contributed to the development and application of high-throughput methodological and computational tools that enable efficient and accurate identification of genome-wide rare sequence and epigenetic variants. As an undergraduate student, he carried out research in infectious diseases investigating the protozoan parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi* the pathological agent for Chagas' disease.

**Email:** enrique.ramos@ttuhsc.edu

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Tejaswini P. Reddy, BA**

**MD/PhD Candidate**

**Texas A&M College of Medicine/Houston Methodist Research Institute  
Texas**

Teja Reddy is a sixth-year MD/PhD Candidate at Texas A&M University College of Medicine. Teja received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Neuroscience from Wellesley College. She is conducting graduate research at Houston Methodist Research Institute under the mentorship of Dr. Jenny Chang, a world-renowned clinical investigator in breast oncology. Her current research is focused on preclinical studies to develop novel therapeutic strategies against metaplastic breast cancer, a highly aggressive and chemorefractory breast cancer subtype. She is interested in investigational cancer therapeutics to treat women's malignancies and delineating mechanisms of action of drug combinations.

**Email:** [treddy@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:treddy@houstonmethodist.org)



### **Michael Serzan, MD**

**Oncology Fellow**

**Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center  
District of Columbia**

Michael Serzan is a hematology/oncology fellow at the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center in Washington, DC. Dr. Serzan's vision is to optimize outcomes for all patients treated with immune-based therapies. His clinical interests are in the treatment of patients with advanced genitourinary and cutaneous malignancies. His research focus is in early phase clinical trials and biomarkers of immune mediated adverse events. He is the lead investigator on a retrospective immuno-oncology database and a clinical trial for patients with advanced kidney cancer. He has participated in the AACR Vail Clinical Trial Workshop and the FDA Oncology Educational Fellowship.

**Email:** [michael.serzan@gmail.com](mailto:michael.serzan@gmail.com)



## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Mohsin Shah, MBBS**

**Postdoctoral Fellow  
University of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania**

Mohsin Shah seeks to become an independent patient oriented physician scientist with expertise in (a) evaluating novel cancer interventions (b) generating real-world evidence from those novel cancer interventions (c) optimizing pharmacoepidemiology research methods to adapt to patients with cancer.

**Email:** mohsin.shah@penmedicine.upenn.edu



### **Nour Shobaki, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Immuno-Oncology  
Georgetown University  
District of Columbia**

Nour Shobaki PharmD, PhD, is a postdoc at the Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington D.C. A native of Nablus, Palestine, she first trained as a clinical pharmacist and obtained her PharmD degree at An-Najah National University. As a Government of Japan MEXT scholar, she earned her M.S. and PhD degrees in pharmaceutical science at Hokkaido University where she focused on developing drug delivery systems (e.g. lipid nanoparticles) to target macrophages for cancer immunotherapy. As a postdoc at Georgetown, her work focuses on studying T cells in the tumor-microenvironment aiming to develop T-cell based cancer immunotherapy.

**Email:** shobaki.nour@gmail.com

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*



### **Ansam Sinjab, PhD**

**Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Texas**

Ansam's earliest fascination with research was driven by a life-changing high school camp experience at MIT, followed by pursuing her undergraduate studies and later, my PhD in Cancer Biology from Germany. Currently a postdoctoral fellow at MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, she is decoding the earliest phases in lung cancer evolution. Her goal is to help derive new strategies that inhibit lung cancer, a motivation that stems from a dire need to alleviate the public burden of this aggressive malignancy. This work has been inseparable from her commitment to promote equitable access to research opportunities and publicly communicate evidence-based science.

**Email:** [asinjab@mdanderson.org](mailto:asinjab@mdanderson.org)



### **Mary M. Stangis, MS**

**PhD Student  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Wisconsin**

Mary is a first-year Cancer Biology PhD student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She holds her Master of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Wayne State University's School of Medicine, and her Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Michigan Technological University. Her research interests include the FGF/FGFR signaling axis, as well as the role the tumor microenvironment plays in metastasis and acquisition of resistance to therapy. Her ultimate goal is to become a professor and principal investigator, so that she can help educate the next generation of research scientists.

**Email:** [stangis@wisc.edu](mailto:stangis@wisc.edu)

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER PARTICIPANTS *(cont'd)*

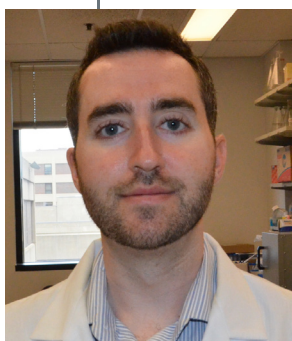


### **Cody Wolf, BS**

**Graduate Student Research Assistant  
Boise State University  
Idaho**

Cody Wolf is a PhD candidate in Biomolecular Sciences at Boise State University. His research focuses on inflammatory cytokines and their role in breast and prostate cancer progression, as well as developing novel small molecule inhibitors to inhibit cancer progression. In addition to his research, Cody is an active member of the American Cancer Society-Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) non-profit organization, and has been the lead volunteer for ACS CAN in Idaho since 2020.

**Email:** [codywolf@u.boisestate.edu](mailto:codywolf@u.boisestate.edu)



### **David J. Zahavi, MS**

**PhD Candidate  
Georgetown University  
District of Columbia**

David Zahavi is a PhD Candidate at Georgetown University in the Tumor Biology Program. David's current research focus is identifying tumor cell resistance mechanisms to monoclonal antibody therapy and developing improved immunotherapies for cancer. David is pursuing a career in science policy in order to help guide policymakers in addressing problems faced by translational researchers, challenges in communicating complex scientific information, and issues surrounding emerging technologies. Outside the lab, David enjoys running, trying new restaurants, and going to the movies.

**Email:** [djz8@georgetown.edu](mailto:djz8@georgetown.edu)

## OTHER EVENTS



### AACR Early-Career National Day of Action

In conjunction with the AACR Early-career Hill Day on March 3, we invite early-career scientists anywhere in the U.S. to participate in the National Day of Action by contacting members of Congress and urging their support for robust, sustained, and predictable funding increases for the National Institutes of Health. Participants can send an email (or tweet at) their representatives and senators using our online advocacy campaign, which will be available at <https://www.aacr.org/professionals/policy-and-advocacy/aacr-legislative-action-center/>.

### AACR Virtual Patient Advocate Forums

The AACR will host a series of virtual Patient Advocate Forums throughout 2022. Patient advocates from across the cancer community join these free virtual events to get the latest information on cancer research, new discoveries, and potential cancer treatments. Speakers include patient advocates, researchers, and clinicians. For more information and to register, please see the AACR Patient Advocate Events page: <https://www.aacr.org/patients-caregivers/patient-advocacy/aacr-events-for-patient-advocates/>

### AACR Annual Meeting 2022 Policy Sessions

The AACR Annual Meeting 2022 will take place April 8-13 in New Orleans. The AACR Office of Science Policy and Government Affairs is planning several sessions on regulatory policy as well as tobacco and public health policy that will feature government agency officials, industry representatives, leaders in academia, and patient advocates. For more information as the sessions are announced, please see the AACR Annual Meeting 2022 website: <https://www.aacr.org/meeting/aacr-annual-meeting-2022/>.

### FDA-AACR Oncology Educational Fellowship

The FDA-AACR Oncology Educational Fellowship is designed to provide early-career researchers a window into oncology drug development and the regulatory review process. A joint initiative of the AACR and the Oncology Center of Excellence at the FDA, the fellowship provides interactive educational activities and networking opportunities with experts from the AACR and the Oncology Center of Excellence. Hematology/oncology fellows and early-career cancer investigators with advanced degrees are eligible to apply. For more information as the 2022 application timeline is announced, please see the FDA-AACR Oncology Educational Fellowship page: <https://www.aacr.org/professionals/policy-and-advocacy/regulatory-science-and-policy/fda-aacr-oncology-educational-fellowship/>

## OTHER EVENTS *(cont'd)*

### AACR/AACI Joint Hill Day

The AACR and the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) will host their annual joint Hill Day on Wednesday, June 15, 2022, as a virtual event. This Hill Day will bring together cancer center directors, researchers, physician-scientists, cancer survivors and other advocates to meet with members of Congress and build support for a strong federal investment in biomedical research, and cancer research in particular, through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Registration for the Hill Day will open in early April on this page:

**<https://www.AACI-Cancer.org/Hill-Day>.**

### AACR Cancer Progress Report

The annual *AACR Cancer Progress Report* to Congress and the American public is a cornerstone of the efforts of the AACR to educate the public about cancer and the importance of biomedical research, as well as to advocate for increased federal funding for the NIH, NCI, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report highlights how recent advances across the clinical cancer care continuum are helping cancer patients and their loved ones. The 12th annual *AACR Cancer Progress Report* will be released in September 2022. To view the current version of the report, please visit **<https://CancerProgressReport.AACR.org/Progress/>**.

### AACR Cancer Disparities Progress Report

The AACR released its inaugural *AACR Cancer Disparities Progress Report* in September 2020 during a virtual congressional briefing. This report, the first of its kind, features the latest research on why disparities in cancer incidence, diagnosis, treatment, and survival exist, and what can be done to address them. The second *AACR Cancer Disparities Progress Report* will be released in June 2022. The first edition can be found at **<https://CancerProgressReport.AACR.org/Disparities/>**.

### Rally for Medical Research

The Rally for Medical Research, coordinated by the AACR in partnership with more than 350 organizations, brings together patients, caregivers, researchers, and health care professionals to advocate for increased funding for the NIH. During the 2021 Virtual Rally, over 400 advocates representing nearly every state learned about the appropriations process and effective strategies for communicating with lawmakers before attending virtual meetings with their members of Congress and staff. The 10th annual Rally for Medical Research will take place September 13-14, 2022. Please visit the Rally website for more information: **<https://RallyForMedicalResearch.org/>**.

# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



## CancerCareers.org

AACR's CancerCareers.org offers unparalleled career services and opportunities to cancer and biomedical researchers seeking to advance their scientific careers, and to employers who are seeking to recruit highly qualified scientists.

Scientific researchers and clinicians may access CancerCareers.org's website to create a user profile, upload a CV/resume, create job alerts, browse through, and apply for hundreds of career opportunities which are advertised by some of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, cancer research institutions, government agencies, and academia. The site also has the capability to store CVs/resumes and search for various research categories.

Employers are able to post an unlimited number of job announcements onto the CancerCareers.org's website, with the potential of reaching thousands of highly qualified scientists at all scientific levels who are interested in pursuing careers in cancer and biomedical research, as well as in epidemiologic and behavioral research. The CV/resume database contains information on these highly qualified scientists and is available for employers to search.

<https://www.cancercareers.org>

## AACR's 2022 Cancer and Biomedical Career Fair

The AACR Cancer and Biomedical Research Career Fair will take place at AACR's Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA on Saturday, April 9, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (ET). Research scientists and employers will find the 2022 Career Fair to be an exciting opportunity and we invite you to join us for this premier recruiting event. If you are a scientist seeking opportunities within academia, government, or industry, you will have the opportunity to speak with representatives looking to fill many scientific positions.

<https://www.cancercareers.org/pages/33887-2022-career-fair>

### Job seekers will be able to:

- **Meet employers face-to-face** from academic cancer institutions, the pharmaceutical industry and many other scientifically related organizations
- Upload your CV/resume on CancerCareers.org
- Sign up for Job Alerts
- **Learn about many scientific career opportunities**

Visit [CancerCareers.org](https://www.cancercareers.org) for more information

Visit us at  
[AACR.org](https://www.aacr.org)  
for more information.



## AACR Staff Contact

### Membership and Professional Development

215-440-9300 • [membership@aacr.org](mailto:membership@aacr.org)

Robin E. Felder, Director

Madeline Atkinson, Coordinator

Olena Klyn, Coordinator

### Office of Science Policy and Government Affairs

(202) 898-6499 • [govrelations@aacr.org](mailto:govrelations@aacr.org)

Dana Acton, Director, Science Policy and Legislative Affairs

Brandon Leonard, Associate Director, Congressional Relations

Marc B. Johnson, Senior Manager of Congressional Relations

**AACR** American Association  
for Cancer Research®

**FINDING CURES TOGETHER®**

Membership and Professional Development  
615 Chestnut Street | 17th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-4404  
215-440-9300 Telephone | 866-423-3965 Toll Free  
267-765-1078 Fax | [membership@aacr.org](mailto:membership@aacr.org)  
[AACR.org](http://AACR.org)

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