Dear colleagues,

A new term is entering the cancer treatment lingo this year: precision medicine. It takes into account what many cancer centers already were practicing: patients are different, so doctors who treat cancer have to take into account the differences in each person’s genes, environment and lifestyle.

The idea goes beyond what one institution can do and encompasses what many, including UMMC, are trying to provide. Ideally, sooner than later, using new technology and the genetic and biomedical information patients agree to provide – and with increased computational ability – scientists will be able to improve cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis and therapy even as they tailor those elements to individuals.

On the local front, UMMC already uses multidisciplinary teams in which specialists in multiple disciplines gather to discuss each patient and probable treatments.

For example, pathologists on these teams run multiple tests on each tissue sample to learn as much as they can about the molecular, genetic and biologic characteristics of the cancer. Whether a cancer has or does not have particular characteristics may tell the team if the cancer is more likely to respond to a specific therapy or not.

Many patients with specific variations in their cancer will respond to newer targeted therapies, offering them a therapy with fewer side effects and a better prognosis.

Not too far in the future, physicians hope the testing also can tell them if patients will experience the general side effects of the therapies. Pathologists test cancer cell samples in multiple ways, each test telling them more about the cancer, such as whether it will respond to specific drugs or whether it’s likely to be aggressive or slower growing.

For University Cancer Care physicians, finding out someone’s cancer is unlikely to respond to a drug is as important as finding out it probably will respond. That way, they don’t waste time with a drug that doesn’t work or submit their patient to its side effects.

As physicians use these ever-growing discoveries to plan treatment, Cancer Institute researchers look for more of them. Scientists at UMMC search for new targets on cancer cells and work with colleagues at the National Center for Natural Products Research at Ole Miss to find ways to hit those targets, blocking cancer’s growth.

Other factors will come into play, too.

- Genetic testing is a growing field. This, too, can help physicians know if particular therapies will work or if a patient is more likely to have a particular type of cancer, enabling them to screen early and often for it. Currently, a geneticist works with UMMC cancer care teams.

- Molecular information about cancer is growing rapidly. New technology is responsible for some of the growth. As it grows, UMMC and its Drug Discovery Core in Oxford is working to find new and better therapies for cancers that most often affect Mississippians.

- Nationally, the scientific community also is talking about faster ways to safely bring these new therapies to clinical trials and to patients who may benefit from them. Under the current process, a new drug can take a decade or longer to go from discovery in a lab to general use in clinics. With researchers and physicians pinpointing particular cancer characteristics, they’ll focus on groups of people who have those characteristics. So, they are searching for a way to streamline the current approval process.

- New discoveries result in volumes of data, so computer analysis and mining that data for results that can be applied to specific groups of cancers will become more and more important.

- With the advancing use of electronic health records and with each patient’s permission, researchers will be able to search health data for common elements that may help identify characteristics pertaining to cancer.

All of the ideas come back to one that has been central to us for a long time: each person is different and is likely to respond to cancer therapy differently. For now, we’ll use every test available and indicated to find the characteristics of each person’s cancer, even as we continue to learn more about cancer and possible therapies to stop it.
Oncology nurses achieve OCN certification

Two University Cancer Care oncology nurses who work in the outpatient clinic have received Oncology Certified Nurse certifications.

- Cynthia Godfrey, R.N. II, an oncology charge nurse in the Cancer Institute Infusion Area, oversees the infusion area to make sure a patient’s chemotherapy/biotherapy/blood products are ordered/administered correctly.

- Sheila Clincy, R.N. II, an oncology nurse in the Cancer Institute Infusion Area, administers chemotherapy and blood products and teaches patients about side effects and possible adverse reactions to chemotherapy.

Colon cancer ‘get screened’ campaign kicks off this month

Lowering risk factors for cancer and being screened for them are major components of stopping cancer deaths in Mississippi, say University Cancer Care team members.

“We know that people who use the screening that is available often can catch any signs of cancer earlier when it is more treatable,” said Dr. Srinivasan Vijayakumar, professor and chair of radiation oncology and Cancer Institute director.

In the coming months, University Cancer Care staff are participating in campaigns to urge people to be screened or are offering several free screenings.

Colon Cancer Screenings

UMMC’s Cancer Institute is part of a statewide coalition encouraging every Mississippian who meets the criteria for colon cancer screening to be screened.

Dr. Roy Duhe, professor of pharmacology and toxicology and Cancer Institute associate director for education, helped form the coalition. The group kicked off its educational efforts this month with a news conference at the Mississippi State Capitol, booths at various festivals across the state and a Gulf Coast effort to encourage college-age students to ask their parents if they should be screened or if they have been screened.

The gold-star screening is a colonoscopy, a procedure in which physicians can remove polyps, should they find any. Another warning sign of colorectal cancer is blood in the stool, and physicians have kits to help detect that. Many other conditions can cause this, too, so further scrutiny is needed to see if it’s colorectal cancer.

The group, 70x2020 Initiative, seeks to see 70 percent of Mississippis who are age 50 or older screened for colorectal cancer by the year 2020. Mississippi has one of the highest colorectal cancer rates in the nation and one of the highest death rates from this cancer. Screening likely would cut those deaths by 60 percent, simply by finding the cancer earlier or removing polyps before they become malignant, physicians say.

To learn more about colorectal cancer, visit http://www.ummchealth.com/Health_Care_Services/Cancer/Adult/Cancer_Types/Gastrointestinal/Colorectal_Cancer/Colorectal_Cancer_default.aspx.

To learn more about colorectal screening, visit http://www.ummchealth.com/cancerscreen/.

Oral Cancer Screenings

UMMC’s Department of Otolaryngology and the Division of Oral Oncology will offer oral cancer screenings from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 15, in the Cancer Institute’s clinical offices at the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center.

The screenings are offered as part of Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week. Walk-ins are accepted, but people also can call (601) 984-5162 for an appointment. Each screening takes about 10 minutes.

Physicians, dentists and residents on the University Cancer Care Head and Neck Cancer team will conduct the screenings. Staff from the ACT Center for Treatment, Education and Research also will have information on halting tobacco use, a risk factor in many head and neck cancers.

Oral Cancer awareness and screenings

The School of Dentistry’s chapter of the Student National Dental Association will hold its second Oral Cancer Awareness 5K Run and Screening beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday, May 2, at Renaissance at Colony Park in Ridgeland.

The run is primarily to raise awareness of oral cancers and the actions people can take to lower their risk of them. Students also will offer free oral cancer screenings.

For more information, email Walter Moses at wmoses@umc.edu. To learn more about oral cancers, visit http://www.ummchealth.com/Health_Care_Services/Cancer/Adult/Cancer_Types/Head_and_Neck/Oral_Cancer/Oral_Cancer_default.aspx. To learn more about oral cancer screening, visit http://www.ummchealth.com/cancerscreen/.

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Skin Cancer Screenings

UMMC’s Department of Dermatology and its Dermatology Student Interest Group are offering free skin cancer screenings from 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday, May 19, in Suite K at the UMMC Pavilion.

Dr. Stephen Helms, who is coordinating the effort, said the group hopes to screen about 150 people. He encourages those seeking a screening to call for an appointment.

The department is working with the American Academy of Dermatology, so the screening is part of a national effort to raise awareness about skin cancer and find it early. According to the Academy, skin cancer caught early has a 98-percent cure rate.

“This is one more thing to raise awareness of skin cancers,” Helms said. “This is all free. We’re not treating skin disease, we’re looking for anything that looks suspicious.”

If doctors and the residents working with them find a suspicious area, they’ll refer the person for follow-up with his or her dermatologist, plastic surgeon or family physician. Those who have no preferred physician can make an appointment with a UMMC physician.

“We’ll have a diagram with the body outlined on it and we’ll designate where we found the suspicious tissue,” Helms said. “They can take that to their doctor to show them the paper.”

Skin cancers are the most common cancer. Basal and squamous cell cancers dominate.

Skin cancers, including melanoma, most often affect the skin on a person’s face, neck, arms and legs, areas of the skin that are more often exposed to the sun. Melanoma is the deadliest of the three.

Helms encourages anyone with a questionable mole to come to the screening.

Helms encourages anyone with a questionable mole to come to the screening. To learn more about skin cancer, visit http://www.ummchealth.com/skincancer/.

To learn more about skin cancer screening, visit http://www.ummchealth.com/cancerscreen/.

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Sprucing up to receive breast cancer survivors

Debbie Simpson, left, who works with University Cancer Care’s breast services team, Melissa Dent, center, and Martha Banks from Home Care Medical prepare a morning reception for breast cancer survivors Oct. 30. The reception was one of four during October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Three were in the medical oncology clinics for patients and one in the hallway outside Radiation Oncology for patients and the public.
Drug delivery patent could lead to better chemo treatments

Two University of Mississippi Medical Center researchers were awarded a patent that could revolutionize how cancer drugs are delivered.

The new approach is one that could cut down on the number of chemotherapy treatments required, a measure that could save patients from some of the side effects that come with the aggressive treatment.

Additionally, Dr. Drazen Raucher and Dr. Lee Bidwell say the change in delivering the drugs could allow treatment for certain cancers that currently aren’t viable for chemotherapy.

Raucher, a UMMC biochemistry professor, has a video with the arrow-like depiction that demonstrates how a peptide (arrowhead) linked to a polypeptide shaft can deliver a different peptide (arrow fletching or vane) to cancer cells.

The pair’s patent is for this platform designed to deliver anti-cancer therapies only to tumors. If it proves safe and works in humans, it could reduce the amount of chemotherapy cancer patients need and therefore eliminate or reduce many side effects from it.

“Right now, you can’t give it at certain levels because it harms the patient,” Raucher said. “With this, they (physicians) can selectively target the tumor.”

Heat makes it work. Raucher said the blend is injected while the tumor is heated using MRI-directed, high-intensity focused ultrasound.

“The heat makes it aggregate, get stuck in the tumor and kill it,” he said.

Since it doesn’t work without heat, any part of the injection that lingers near healthy cells never reacts and instead breaks down in the body, reducing the side effects.

Using these peptides, small pieces of protein that interfere with the interactions of cancer-causing proteins, is a more specific way to destroy cancer cells, said Bidwell.

“They’re really specific for their target, the cancer cells,” said Bidwell, an assistant professor of neurology. “They don’t bind with healthy cells.”

The drawback they had to overcome? Peptides break down in the body. The platform they’ve developed stabilizes the peptide until it reaches the tumor.

The new patent is similar to one Raucher and his team received in 2012 in that it covers a method that delivers therapy only to malignant cells. It’s a process he’s been developing for more than a decade.

Together, Raucher and Bidwell have tested 20-30 products and found three to four that work. Since the peptides that drive the arrow home are not tissue-specific, the method has the ability to work in many organs.

“Some cancer cells are more partial to the blood/brain barrier,” Raucher said. “Some accumulate more in specific organs, such as the liver.”

So far, it’s worked in mice infected with human pancreatic and breast cancer cells and in rats with glioblastoma (a type of brain tumor). One major component: these new “arrows” can pierce blood/brain barriers.

Physicians here explain that the brain protects itself from most outside intruders, so many chemotherapy treatments never reach brain tumors. This development may open a new therapy option for brain tumors.

Dr. Srinivasan Vijayakumar, director of UMMC’s Cancer Institute, said advances such as this will make cancer treatment easier on patients and more efficient long term.

“We love to see Cancer Institute members coming up with new ways to treat cancer that are easier on the patient,” Vijayakumar said. “I anticipate Dr. Raucher’s and Dr. Bidwell’s work will succeed in accomplishing this goal.”

Raucher said their success in the lab may be years away from trials in humans. They need years to prepare before they seek Federal Drug Administration approval to test it in humans.

First, the collaborators must raise $3 million to $4 million to test the compound in outside labs and verify its safety. They also need the help of pharmaceutical companies to help make sure the chemotherapy drugs are purified and will adhere to the delivery compound.

If the FDA approves the method and process, they then need money to offer a Phase 1 clinical trial, one that involves very few people and would help test the drug for safety in humans.

Raucher doesn’t see this replacing drugs that other researchers are seeking now.

“This will enhance the efficacy of delivery to tumor cells, to kill tumor cells and spare healthy tissue,” he said. “We know there’s no single drug that can kill cancer. For most, you must have a combination.”

Dr. Drazen Raucher, left, and Dr. Lee Bidwell continue their research into cancer-drug delivery systems.
UMMC cancer researchers, physicians present work

Research by Cancer Institute members and physicians at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson and at the University of Mississippi in Oxford results in many projects being published in medical journals or presented at medical and scientific conferences. Work published or presented October through December includes:

**Dr. Gene Bidwell**

**Publications:**

**Abstracts:**

**Dr. Asok Dasmahaptra**

**Publications:**

**Dr. Robert Hamilton**

**Publications**

**Dr. Anait Levenson**

**Publications:**

**Abstract:**

**Invited speaker:**

**Dr. Gail Megason**

**Publication:**
Vijayakumar V1, Lowery R1, Zhang X1, Hicks C1, Rezeanu L1, Barr J1, Giles H1, Vijayakumar S1, Megason G1. “Pediatric osteosarcoma: a single institution’s experience.” South Med J. 2014 Nov;107(11):671-5. doi: 10.14423/SMJ.0000000000000187.
Dr. Yin-Yuan Mo
Publications:

Dr. Narashima Murthy
Publications:

Dr. Dale Nagle
Publication:

Dr. David Pasco
Publication:

Dr. Eddie Perkins
Publications:

Dr. Radhika Pochampally
Publications:

Dr. Drazen Raucher
Publications:

Dr. Kenneth Sufka
Abstracts:


Dr. Guri Tzivion
Publication:

Dr. Srinivasan Vijayakumar
Publication:
Vijayakumar V1, Lowery R1, Zhang X1, Hicks C1, Rezeanu L1, Barr J1, Giles H1, Vijayakumar S1, Megason G1. Pediatric osteosarcoma: a single institution’s experience. South Med J. 2014 Nov;107(11):671-5. doi: 10.14423/SMJ.0000000000000187.

Dr. Vani Vijayakumar
Publication:
Vijayakumar V1, Lowery R1, Zhang X1, Hicks C1, Rezeanu L1, Barr J1, Giles H1, Vijayakumar S1, Megason G1. “Pediatric osteosarcoma: a single institution’s experience.” South Med J. 2014 Nov;107(11):671-5. doi: 10.14423/SMJ.0000000000000187.

Dr. Randy Wadkins
Publications:


Dr. Larry Walker
Publications:


Dr. Kristine Willet
Publications:


Dr. Keli Xu
Publication:

Dr. Xinchun Zhou
Publication:
RESEARCH

CI members recognized for grant funding

Cancer Institute investigators were among 26 Medical Center researchers honored at the annual Excellence in Research Awards. The program recognizes those who bring in the most outside funding for their projects.

“Since the inception of these awards, this year’s group is one of the largest to be recognized,” said Dr. Richard Summers, UMMC associate vice chancellor for research.

Now in its 14th year, the awards recognize researchers whose projects drew in the top-dollar amounts for the year. Split among four levels – Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum – the researchers were recognized based on their funding totals.

This year, UMMC was among the top 10 academic medical centers in percentage funding increase received from the National Institutes of Health, said Dr. James E. Keeton, former vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine.

The increase is an unusual one for many medical centers, said Summers.

“We need to build on that,” he said. “We can’t stop now.”

Dr. Srinivasan Vijayakumar, professor and chair of radiation oncology and Cancer Institute director, said many of the grants cover multiple years.

“I’m very proud of our Cancer Institute members and share their hopes that the funds will help us find a cure for cancer,” he said.

Summers also said the Excellence in Research Awards may expand to include recognition of significant discoveries by UMMC researchers. Some of those achievements are not easily measured in dollars.

Cancer Institute members honored were:

- **Bronze Medallion: $250,000 or more:**
  - Dr. Chindo Hicks, associate professor of medicine, director of the Cancer Bioinformatics Core and member of the Cancer Genetics Program
  - Dr. Keli Xu, assistant professor of neurobiology and anatomical sciences and member of the Tumor Cell Biology Program

- **Silver Medallion: up to $500,000:**
  - Dr. Lee Bidwell, assistant professor of neuroscience and member of the Molecular Cancer Therapeutics Program

- **Gold Medallion: Up to $1 million**
  - Dr. Azeddine Atfi, professor of biochemistry and director of the Tumor Cell Biology Program
  - Dr. James “Tate” Thigpen, UMMC
  - $123,895, Mississippi State Department of Health, Mississippi Cancer Registry
  - Dr. Andrew Smith, UMMC
  - $299,951, Intelligent Optical System, Inc., Industry Sponsored Research Agreement
  - Mark Hamann, University of Mississippi
  - $306,423, National Institutes of Health, Natural Product HCV Drugs from Rare Plant-Microbe Interactions

Grants further cancer research in Mississippi

Cancer researchers and physicians were awarded national, regional and local cancer-related grants and contracts, including many that provide funding for multiple years. Grants awarded October-December 2014 include:

- **Dr. Gene Bidwell, UMMC**
  - $336,375, National Institutes of Health, A Novel Protein Delivery System for Therapy of Preeclampsia

- **Dr. Barbara Craft, UMMC**
  - $5,000, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (NIH), PACES Study
  - $68,110, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans (Original source: Department of Health and Human Services), Increasing Awareness and Support for Young Women with Breast Cancer in the Gulf South

- **Dr. Vincent Herrin, UMMC**
  - $8,000, National Marrow Donor Program (original source: Office of Naval Research), Radiation Injury Treatment Network

- **Dr. James “Tate” Thigpen, UMMC**
  - $123,895, Mississippi State Department of Health, Mississippi Cancer Registry

- **Dr. Andrew Smith, UMMC**
  - $299,951, Intelligent Optical System, Inc., Industry Sponsored Research Agreement

- **Mark Hamann, University of Mississippi**
  - $306,423, National Institutes of Health, Natural Product HCV Drugs from Rare Plant-Microbe Interactions
Speakers bring work to UMMC colleagues

Cancer Institute members, University Cancer Care staff and UMMC students have the opportunity to hear faculty, colleagues and nationally recognized speakers share their research. Speakers October through December included:

**Dr. Kirsten Gambrell**, house officer in the Department of Surgery, gave the Surgery Grand Rounds presentation, “Evolution of Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy and Cytoreductive Surgery: Treatment Options for Peritoneal Cancer,” Oct. 15, in the UMMC Classroom Wing.

**Dr. Gailen Marshall**, professor of medicine, vice chair for research, and director of the Division of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, presented “Integrative Medicine and Cancer: Opportunities for Discovery with Clinical Implication,” and **Dr. Joseph F. Maher**, geneticist and professor of clinical hematology, chair of the Clinical Cancer Genetics program, discussed “The Clinical Cancer Genetics Program” at the Cancer Institute’s Joint Clinical and Research Faculty meeting Oct. 16.

**Dr. Michael Ostrowski**, professor and co-director of the Molecular Biology and Cancer Genetics Program at the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Ohio State University, presented “How Stromal Pten Suppresses Human Epithelial Cancers” Oct. 22 at the Arthur C. Guyton Research Library. The UMMC Cancer Institute presented the seminar.

**Dr. Greg Hundley**, medical director of the Reynolds Tower Cardiovascular Imaging Facility at Wake Forest Health Sciences, presented “Cardio-oncology: New Insights from MRI Regarding Cancer Treatment-Related Cardiovascular Injury” Oct. 23 as part of the Robert M. Hearin Distinguished Lecture Series.

**Dr. Mark Earl**, assistant professor of surgery, gave the Department of Surgery Grand Rounds presentation, “Treatment of Hepatocellular Carcinoma: When You’re a Hammer, the Whole World’s a Nail,” on Nov. 12 in the UMMC Classroom Wing.

**Dr. Andrew Smith**, assistant professor of radiology, presented the Physiology Seminar, “Defining the Role of Liver Nodularity in Chronic Liver Disease,” Nov. 12, in room CW308 of the Classroom Wing.

**Dr. Henry Charles Manning**, Vanderbilt University, and Dr. Michael I. Nickels, Vanderbilt University, discussed “Cyclotron” at the Nov. 20 UMMC Cancer Institute Joint Clinical and Research Faculty meeting.
University Cancer Care physicians and staff at the University of Mississippi Medical Center participated in several events to raise money for cancer patients or research, to provide educational materials to the public about cancer or to discuss advancements in cancer detection and treatment with Mississippi physicians and medical caregivers. In October through December, those activities included:

- **Cancer care staff** offer patient support meetings from 9:30-10:30 a.m. the second and fourth Wednesday and Thursday of each month in the Cancer Institute Patient Resource Center. The meetings were for all UMMC cancer patients and caregivers.

- **Dr. Clark Henegan**, in the Division of Hematology and Oncology, participated in Jackson State University Breast Cancer Awareness month activities in October.

- **Oct. 1:** **Dr. Lana Jackson**, a surgeon on University Cancer Care’s Head and Neck team, gave a lecture on Oral Cavity Cancer for the clinical staff at Grenada Lakes Medical Center/UMMC Grenada.

- **Oct. 9, 16 and 30:** **Debbie Simpson**, a member of the Breast Services Care Team, helped organize a Breast Cancer Patient Reception in the waiting area of the Breast Services Clinic.

- **Oct. 10:** **Dacia Green Breeden**, nutritionist for the Cancer Institute, and **Janice Johnson**, manager of its Patient Resource Center, joined other UMMC professionals at the Mississippi State Fair. The duo distributed information about screenings and risk factors for various cancers.

- **Oct. 22:** The Cancer Institute Patient Resource Center hosted its fourth annual Breast Cancer Basket Giveaway in observance of Breast Cancer Month. **Johnson** donated a basket, and **Shannon Strong**, patient advocate in the Cancer Institute pharmacy, donated a painting. About 70 patients, family or caregivers attended. Each received a gift bag and refreshments.

- **Oct. 25:** The American Cancer Society hosted its annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, starting at Thalia Mara Hall. The 387 teams participating raised $126,560.10. **Debbie Simpson** from University Cancer Care Breast Services led a Cancer Institute group that sponsored the Survivors Tent. About 350 survivors received gift bags, treats and a trip to a photo booth. ACS estimated 7,500 walkers participated.

- **Oct. 29:** **Dr. Roy J. Duhé**, professor of pharmacology and toxicology, professor of radiation oncology and Cancer Institute associate director for cancer education, discussed “70x2020: The Path to Eliminate Colorectal Cancer Mortality in Mississippi” at the Mississippi Partnership for Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition Meeting in Jackson. Representatives from the Centers for Disease Control were among the 34 attending.

- **Oct. 29:** **Johnson** provided cancer-related information at the City of Jackson’s 21st annual Senior Health and Wellness Fair at the Jackson Convention Complex. The theme was “Live Healthy, Happy and Well.”

- **Oct. 30:** **Johnson** provided cancer-related materials at Jackson State University’s Community Health Fair at Blackburn Laboratory Middle School in Jackson. The fair is part of the One Fit JSU Wellness Initiative. About 200 students and staff attended.

- **Nov. 12:** **Duhé** discussed “Mississippi’s Response to Colorectal Cancer” at the 2014 Deep South Network Institute in Birmingham, Ala. Most of the 300 participants were community health advisors.

- **Dec. 4:** **Duhé** discussed “70x2020: The Path to Eliminate Colorectal Cancer Mortality in Mississippi” with the executive board of the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation in Greenwood. The board unanimously agreed to support and participate in the initiative.
Cancer Care staff work to ease cancer burden

Faculty and staff at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and community groups participate in many area events to raise funds for research and patient needs or to promote cancer education and prevention.

Upcoming events include:

- **April 10-12**: The Mississippi Gulf Coast Bluebird Cancer Retreat offers its Spring Retreat for adult cancer patients and survivors from Harrison, Jackson, Hancock, Stone and George counties. Registration ends March 27. For details or to register, visit www.bluebirdcancerretreat.org.

- **April 11**: The Susan G. Komen Central Mississippi Steel Magnolias Chapter hosts its Race for the Cure in Jackson. For details, visit http://www.komencentralms.org/.

- **April 15**: The Medical Center’s Department of Otolaryngology and Division of Oral Oncology will offer oral oncology screening from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Medical Center’s cancer clinics at the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center. The screening is part of Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week. Appointments and walk-ins will be accepted. To schedule an appointment, call 601-984-5162.

- **April 24**: The Medical Center’s Department of Dermatology will present a symposium for state dermatologists and nurse practitioners from 9:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at the UMMC Conference Center at the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center. The “What’s New in Medical and Surgical Dermatology? 2015 Update” will offer continuing medical education credit to participants. For more information or to register, visit http://www.cvent.com/events/what's-new-in-medical-and-surgical-dermatology-2015-update/event-summary-6977f80657fe440ea44b8c1.aspx.

- **May 2**: The Medical Center’s second Oral Cancer Awareness 5K Run and Screening will take place at 8 a.m. at the Renaissance at Colony Park in Ridgeland. This event is organized by Dr. Mohammed Qaisi and the School of Dentistry’s chapter of the Student National Dental Association. It is open to the public.

- **May 16**: The Lung Force Walk at Mirror Lake off Lakeland Drive in Flowood is 8 a.m. to noon. The event is sponsored by the American Lung Association-Mississippi Chapter. It encourages walkers and virtual walkers to help raise funds for awareness and patient programs. For more information or to register, visit http://action.lung.org/site/TR/?pg=entry&fr_id=10510.

- **May 17-18**: Take a Swing at Cancer is an annual golf tournament sponsored by the North Mississippi Medical Center’s Health Care Foundation. Proceeds help cancer patients. For more information, visit http://www.nmhs.net/hcf_take_a_swing.php.

- **June 26-28**: The Mississippi Gulf Coast Bluebird Cancer Retreat offers its BlueBird Cancer Retreat Just for Teens! Registration details soon will be at www.bluebirdcancerretreat.org. This organization serves Harrison, Jackson, Hancock, Stone and George counties.


- **Oct. 8**: The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s Light the Night Walk at Trustmark Park in Pearl starts at 5:30 p.m. For details or to register, visit http://pages.lightthenight.org/search?searchState=eventoSearch.

- **Oct. 25**: Mississippi Ride for Kids, an activity of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, takes place. For details, visit http://pbtf.convio.net/site/TR/2015RideforKids/General?pg=informational&fr_id=2222&type=fr_informational&sid=1090#.VMpxXWjF98E.
Relay for Life

American Cancer Society Relay for Life teams have events scheduled through August. UMMC has several teams participating in metro-area walks. Some times and dates may change closer to the event. Check the ACS website at http://www.relayforlife.org/getinvolved/findanevent/app/findanevent.aspx?searchQuery=Mississippi&x=0&y=0&StartIndex=1 for updates or to register for a walk or team.

Tentative dates include:

April 10
- Relay for Life of Calhoun County-Bruce, Bruce High School
- Relay for Life of Lafayette County-University of Mississippi
- Relay for Life of Leflore County-Greenwood, Leflore County Ag Center
- Relay for Life of MSU-Starkville, Mississippi State University
- Relay for Life of Jasper County-Bay Springs, Bay Springs City Park
- Relay for Life of Coahoma County-Clarksdale, Coahoma County Expo Center

April 17
- Relay for Life of Covington County-Seminary: downtown Seminary

April 18
- Bark for Life of DeSoto County-Olive Branch, Olive Branch City Park
- Relay for Life of Hinds County-Clinton, Old Towne Clinton

April 23
- Relay for Life of Forrest County-University of Southern Mississippi, USM

April 24
- Relay for Life of Rankin County-Flowood/Reservoir, Northwest Rankin High School
- Relay for Life of Rankin County-Central Brandon, Shiloh Park
- Relay for Life of Forrest County-Hattiesburg, Tatum Park
- Relay for Life of Jones County-Laurel, South Mississippi Fairgrounds
- Relay for Life of Lauderdale County-Meridian, Northeast Soccer Complex
- Relay for Life of Lowndes County-Columbus, Columbus Soccer Complex
- Relay for Life of Madison County-Canton, Canton Multipurpose Complex
- Relay for Life of Montgomery County-Winona, Montgomery County Coliseum
- Relay for Life of Simpson County-Magee, Magee Sportsplex
- Relay for Life of Pontotoc County-Pontotoc, Pontotoc Courthouse Square
- Relay for Life of Sunflower County-Indianola, BB King Museum

April 25
- Relay for Life of Clarke County-Quitman, Archusa Creek Water Park
- Relay for Life of Hancock County-Bay St. Louis, Historic Train Depot, Depot District
- Relay for Life of Webster County-Eupora, NMMC-Eupora Walking Track

April 30
- Relay for Life of Scott County-Forest, Gaddis Park Walking Track

May 1
- Relay for Life of Madison County-Ridgeland, Liberty Park
- Relay for Life of Chickasaw County-Houston, Houston City Park
- Relay for Life of Forrest County-Petal, Relay Park
- Relay for Life of Greene County-Leakesville
- Relay for Life of Jefferson Davis County-Prentiss, Long Leaf Trace Park
- Relay for Life of Lamar County-Purvis, Lamar County Multipurpose Center
- Relay for Life of Lawrence County-Monticello, Lawrence High School
- Relay for Life of Marion County-Columbia, Columbia High School
- Relay for Life of Newton County-Decatur, East Central Community College
- Relay for Life of Smith County-Taylorsville, Downtown Taylorsville
- Relay for Life of Warren County-Vicksburg, Warren Central High School
- Relay for Life of Yalobusha County-Water Valley, Crawford Sports Complex

May 2
- Relay for Life of Jackson County-East Pascagoula, Waterfront Pier by NOAA
- Relay for Life of Lincoln County- Brookhaven, Exchange Club Park

May 8
- Relay for Life of Hinds-Byram, Countrywood Baptist Church
- Relay for Life of Copiah County-Hazlehurst, Hazlehurst High School
- Relay for Life of Grenada County-Grenada, Grenada High School
- Relay for Life of Lafayette County-Oxford, Jackson Avenue
- Relay for Life of Pike County-McComb, SWMRMC Walking Track
- Relay for Life of Walthall County-Tylertown, Holmes Water Park

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CASE-Carnegie names CI member state’s professor of the year

Dr. Kenneth Sufka, professor of psychology and pharmacology at the University of Mississippi and a Cancer Institute researcher, was named a 2014 State Winner in the CASE-Carnegie U.S. Professors of the Year Program.

The awards program, offered by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, recognizes the best college and university teaching professionals each year.

The program honored four national winners and 31 state winners at a November conference.
Jacob Partlow was her “miracle baby” the day he was born two months premature, Olevia Williams said.

He was her miracle baby again when he survived respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, when he was just 3 months old.

Today, Jacob is still her miracle baby. Now 13, he’s beaten one of the most severe blood cancers, acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and is a seventh-grader at Canton Academy.

Jacob’s journey has been a tough one. Then again, he’s proven he’s a survivor, his mother says.

When her 9-year-old star athlete became too tired to get through taekwondo lessons, play basketball or throw a baseball, Williams knew something was terribly wrong.

They were living in Hattiesburg in 2009; Williams was pursuing a college degree. That June, Jacob “wasn’t himself,” Williams said.

“He was a very active little boy, but he’d gotten to the point where he couldn’t do anything but lie down,” she said. “He would perk up, but then he would go back down.”

When she tried to get a doctor’s appointment, Williams said she was told Jacob would have to wait because he wasn’t an established patient. She took him to a walk-in clinic, where a physician said Jacob might be anemic and gave him medications.

But soon after, Jacob developed a nosebleed at taekwondo practice. “We cleaned him up,” his mother said.

When Jacob went to the bathroom just minutes later, Williams said his instructor called out to her. Jacob had a huge blood clot in his mouth. She rushed him to a local hospital emergency room. There, she said, “the doctor did not touch him. He just sat on his stool and asked me what was going on. He told Jacob to stop picking his nose,” something Jacob doesn’t do, Williams said.

That was on a Tuesday. On Thursday Williams loaded Jacob in the car, drove to Jackson and stopped at a local hospital’s emergency room. “We waited for hours and hours and hours,” she said.

When they saw a physician, he said he’d try to get to the bottom of Jacob’s problems.

“He reached out to grab Jacob’s stomach, and Jacob screamed in pain,” Williams said.

The doctor quickly ordered bloodwork, then gave her the news: leukemia.

“He said he was sending Jacob to UMMC, and that they had good doctors there, and that he was going to get the ambulance to take him there,” she said.

Staff at Batson Children’s Hospital rushed Jacob inside. Dr. Rathi Iyer, professor emeritus of pediatrics, confirmed the diagnosis, placing Jacob in intensive care.

“She told me how sick he was, and that 87 percent of his blood was leukemia cells,” Williams said.

It wasn’t just the leukemia that made Jacob so ill. He lost his gall bladder. He had complications due to his chemotherapy, suffering seizures, neuropathy and short-term memory loss.

“He went through a period of depression, because he wasn’t the little boy he used to be,” Williams said.

But never did Jacob complain of pain, she said.

“Jacob said that he knew from the beginning that he’d be all right,” Williams said. “He felt like he’d already made me deal with so much.

“He felt guilty about so many things that shouldn’t have mattered to a 9-year-old at that time.”

Said Jacob: “I kept my head up. I knew it would be over with in the long run, so I went with it.”

Under the care of Iyer and Dr. Gail Megason, also a professor of pediatrics, Jacob reached true remission in 2012.

“He told me, ‘Don’t worry, mama. It’s over.’” Williams said. “He’s been doing extremely well since he got off his medications. He’s growing. He’s gaining weight.”

“Jacob is a wonderful young man,” Megason said. “He has endured several years of chemotherapy and complications from his diagnosis, but remains cooperative and optimistic.

“He loves to mentor to younger patients, especially at Camp Rainbow.”

This year, Jacob has the honor of serving as Mississippi’s Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals Champion. He’ll be the ambassador for Batson Children’s Hospital and all of Mississippi’s sick and injured children.

Each year, the Champions Program identifies a child in each state with a remarkable medical story. Champions and their families travel to Orlando, Fla., and Washington, D.C., in the fall to highlight the vital work taking place at children’s hospitals.

“I really enjoy being champion,” Jacob said. “I like the honor, and I never thought it would have happened to me.”

His summer before school started was full: a Caribbean cruise with family. A weeklong basketball camp. And his first trip to Disney World as part of his champion duties.

“I’m helping my mom around the house, too,” he said. Jacob sees Megason for checkups as he continues the busy life 13-year-olds should enjoy.

“They were always asking how I was doing,” Jacob said of his two doctors. “They always took care of me.”

Video of Jacob Partlow can be seen at youtube.com/batsonhospital. Search for “leukemia” and search for “Partlow.”
Members of the breast services team participating in the American Cancer Society’s 2014 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer race or helping hand out bags and snacks to survivors on race day Oct. 25 include, from left, Vicki Stout, patient navigator; Nikki Simmons, R.N.; Dr. Sophy Mangana, radiation oncologist; Denise Bates, an orthopedic surgery nurse; and Debbie Simpson, breast services administrative assistant.

University Cancer Care sponsored a survivor’s tent at the race in Jackson. Simpson coordinated the tent that offered breast cancer survivors gift bags from the ACS, treats and a session in the photo booth donated by Mississippi PhotoBooths, LLC.

Simpson headed efforts for one of three UMMC groups sponsoring teams in the race.
American Cancer Society’s Jennifer Myrick, second from left, presents a plaque to leaders of the University Cancer Care Breast Services Team who won a Pink Party from ACS, from left, Debbie Simpson, Breast Services administrative assistant; Dr. Barbara Craft, director of Breast Services; and Nikki Simmons, oncology nurse.

The team of 35 members made the largest deposit on ACS Bank Day, the Thursday before the Oct. 25 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Jackson. Proceeds from the T-shirt sales enabled the team to make a $1,500 deposit on Bank Day. Overall, this UMMC team, one of three from the Medical Center, raised $2,626. Together, the three Medical Center teams donated $3,351 to ACS breast cancer projects.

American Cancer Society passes halfway mark for Hope funding

The American Cancer Society has reached the halfway point in its fund-raising effort for a Hope Lodge adjacent to the UMMC campus.

In December, the ACS announced the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation had made a $3 million donation, one of the largest gifts awarded by the nonprofit in central Mississippi. Once completed, the Jackson Lodge, with an estimated $10.9 million construction cost, will offer lodging to cancer patients who are being treated at metro-area clinics and hospitals.

Nationally, the ACS has 31 Hope Lodges that provided 265,000 nights of free lodging in 2013. The building, to feature 32 guest rooms with private baths and sleeping accommodations for two, will be constructed on land UMMC made available to the ACS. The property, across North State Street from UMMC, is at the former Schimmel’s restaurant location.
Movember tournament boosts prostate cancer research funding

The UMMC School of Medicine’s Class of 2016 recently raised more than $600 for prostate cancer research with a Movember Cornhole Tournament. Winners are (pictured at left) Bo Crumpton, left, and Arthur Davis. The class hosted its Movember “Toss For A Cure” Cornhole Tournament Nov. 15 at Fondren Public, a tournament sponsor.

November is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, also known as Movember. Many in the class also grew mustaches in November to raise awareness of prostate cancer, the leading cause of cancer among men, apart from skin cancers.

Members of the 2016 class (pictured above) pose at the tournament.
Jingle Jog raises $30,000 for Children’s Cancer Center, the state’s only pediatric cancer treatment center.

UMMC employees helping to raise money for the Children’s Cancer Center at the annual Jingle Bell Jog include, from left, Sarah Elizabeth Elkin, Rachel Lowery, Elaine Hobson, Dana Cole, Maggie Goad and LeAnne Howard. The event raised $30,000 to help children treated at University Cancer Care, home to the state’s only pediatric cancer treatment center.

Southern AgCredit’s Fit for Agriculture joined children’s cancer patrons to set up the race that included a USTAF half-marathon, 10K, 5K and Kids’ Run. The race drew more than 1,000 participants, volunteers and donors.

For more information about the race, visit http://www.umc.edu/templatefiles/umc_video.aspx?id=2147532996.
Groups large and small can support UCC

Mississippians have encouraged our patients, caregivers and staff with their generosity. We thank each person who has donated goods, money or time. Groups have staged many efforts, large and small, to help our patients.

Adult

University Cancer Care social workers need snacks for patients in the outpatient clinics at the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center. This clinic does not have access to the cafeterias at UMMC. Social workers and medical providers try to keep snacks, such as crackers, protein bars, water and juices, on hand for those who are seeing several doctors for tests or who are in treatment.

To make a donation, call social worker Erin Campbell at (601) 815-6761.

Pediatric

University Cancer Care’s Children’s Cancer Center is working to raise money for Camp Rainbow, a free summer camp for children ages 6-16 who have a childhood cancer or who have survived one. Doctors, nurses and other medical caregivers from the Children’s Cancer Center staff the camp each year, tending to cuts and bruises as well as oncologic needs.

The camp costs an estimated $40,000 each year. Staff are seeking funds for the camp and in-kind donations to supply the cabins, and for crafts and games. About 80 children attend annually.

Donations may be sent to the UMMC Development Office for the UMMC Camp Rainbow Alliance, or visit www.umc.edu/givetonow. Under “Category” select “Children’s Hospital.” Under “Select a Fund,” select “UMMC Camp Rainbow Alliance.”

To discuss in-kind donations, call Dr. Gail Megason, director of the Children’s Cancer Center, at (601) 984-5220.

University Cancer Care donations

To donate money to help pediatric or adult cancer patients or to further research, visit,

www.umc.edu/giveto

or mail donations (designate the fund) to:
UMMC Development Office
2500 N. State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39216

Funds include:

- The Children’s Cancer Center Fund to help pediatric cancer patients – the fund is listed in “Children’s Hospital” under “Category;”

- The Cancer Institute Support Fund to help adult cancer patients – the fund is listed in “UMMC Options” under “Category;” and

- The Cancer Institute Research Fund to support cancer research – the fund is listed in “UMMC Options” under “Category.”
Donors

Area organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society consistently offer help to cancer patients at UMMC. The staff of the UMMC Cancer Institute and University Cancer Care thank them and the many other people, businesses and organizations who made donations to help adult and pediatric cancer patients, to further education or to fund research. Many donate anonymously. We thank them and others who donated in October, November and December, including:

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Simon Sharp Eagle Fund
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The Cancer Institute is an umbrella under which multiple departments at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the University of Mississippi in Oxford work to halt cancer through patient care, education and research.

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