



SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



It is a pleasure to provide you a message outlining some of the important activities of the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute (SCCI) at SIU for this inaugural publication of our newsletter. The fact that we have begun to use this venue for information exchange is in itself, a milestone in our development. SIU Cancer Institute became a formal entity six years ago when SIU School of Medicine was awarded funding by the state of Illinois to develop a comprehensive cancer program for central and southern Illinois. It was intended to model the

lines laid out by the National Cancer Institute for becoming an NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center. Realizing that this achievement is still several years away, we have made steady progress toward the goal since its inception.

Recruitment to fill the key positions of the administrative structure is progressing well. In 2005, Subhas Chakrabarty Ph.D. was appointed associate director of basic research, and this year John Godwin M.D. was named associate director of clinical programs. Within the coming year, we plan to conduct a national search to hire an associate director for nursing. Along with the leadership of our administrator Mr. Garry Veicht, we will be positioned to occupy the new building that is expected to be completed in early 2008. The new building promises to be a special place for managing patients

with cancer using state of the art care, access to clinical trials, and an optimal opportunity to conduct translational cancer research. Following the ground breaking ceremony for this beautiful building in July 2005, we were thrilled to receive the major gift of 10.2 million dollars from John and Jayne Simmons and SimmonsCooper LLC. One cannot express enough gratitude to these individuals and their group for this generous pledge and their commitment to supporting the cancer needs of the citizens in our downstate region.

There are many areas of activities of our cancer program that I could describe but will resist the temptation of sharing such details in this introductory message. However, what is important to underscore for this inaugural message is that there is a very strong positive energy among a growing number

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“Our vision is to become the premier academic cancer program for central and southern Illinois, lead by research and the development of new methods to lessen the burden of cancer for our predominately rural area.”

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of health care workers connected to the three campuses of SIU. Already, we have conducted a series of retreats and think-tank sessions to channel the multitude of recommendations and visions offered by many talented individuals representing a broad spectrum of disciplines both from within the health sciences and the applied sciences. Our vision is to become the premier aca-

demically cancer program for central and southern Illinois, lead by research and the development of new methods to lessen the burden of cancer for our predominately rural area. The roadmap for reaching this vision is just beginning to evolve. Over the coming six months, we expect to complete an action plan for creating a healthcare network throughout our underserved counties, one that will tie to existing hospitals and local

cancer efforts. Through partnerships based on mutual respect and common goals, we expect to enlist a broad group of disciplines and committed health care workers to help realize our important goal.

Administrative Updates

The SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU has seen much growth over the past several years in almost every area of the Cancer Institute. New faculty and staff have joined the Cancer Institute to provide growth in the areas of clinical services, research, clinical trials, outreach, marketing and development and support services. The core administrative staff pro-

vides the necessary infrastructure to support the mission of the Cancer Institute and interface with those providing cancer research and care in central and southern Illinois.

In addition to building the administrative infrastructure, the new 60,000 square foot SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU building is also in the process of being built. Construction be-

gan in September 2006 and is anticipated to be completed in early 2008.

To learn more about the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU and to keep updated on the latest events, please visit us at www.siumed.edu.



Marketing



On Saturday, September 30th, over 600 participants and 30 sponsors demonstrated their support of our fund-raising efforts by attending the 6th "Denim and Diamonds" gala, proceeds will benefit cancer research in Springfield at the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU.

The gala included musical entertainment, live and silent auctions as well as an international buffet dinner. The auctions featured vacations, dinners, recreational activities, exquisite jewelry, one-of-a-kind artwork, 2007 Mercedes SL550 for one year and an array of other incredi-



ble items.

We are grateful to our dedicated committee. Without their time and talents this event would not have been possible! We also thank our generous sponsors: Citigroup SmithBarney, Humana, Isringhausen Imports, Memorial Medical Center, St. John's Hospital, Bank of Springfield, H.J. & Beverly Collins, Denney Jewelers, Anderson Electric, Brandt Consolidated, Central Illinois Community Blood Center, Joe & Joan Greene, Health Alliance Medical Plans, Johnson Controls, Maria A. Leka (owner M.K. Furs), Petersburg Plumbing and Heating Company, Jack & Rita Victor and Curtis & Karun Tillett, Ameren, William Anderson & Letitia Dewith-Anderson, J. Kevin Dorsey M.D., PhD & Linda Dorsey, Hanson Professional Services



and BSA LifeStructures, Steven Koch CFP / Ameriprise Financial, Gina Kovach & Dave Steward, Medical Business Advisors, Inc, Dr. Robert & Carol Posegate, K. Thomas Robbins, M.D. & Gayle E. Woodson, M.D., Sarah Petty Photography, Staff Carpet, and Mark & Pat Townsend.

Over \$155,000 was raised to further develop the cancer research laboratories planned for the new home of the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU. Research is the path to the cure for cancer. The Denim and Diamonds gala is the

Long before the construction began on its state-of-the-art facility in Springfield, a foundation was built for the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU on the belief that research is the path to a cure for cancer. Your support of the Institute will help accelerate the growth that is critical for its success.

Research offers hope

Clinical Trials

The SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU strives to provide clinical research opportunities to both patients and physicians alike. A combination of physician and pharmaceutical sponsored trials presents cutting edge treatment options for patients through enrollment into clinical research trials. The Clinical Research Office is rapidly growing and evolving, offering a diverse group of services. In general, the office encompasses two primary areas: Clinical Trials and Clinical Data Management.

The mission of the Clinical Trials Office is to provide the people of central and southern Illinois with quality, innovative, and patient centered oncologic care through participation in clinical trials with the most efficient use of available resources. We currently offer a variety of clinical trials for patient participation and will soon be offering many new exciting trials through a consortium with Decatur Memorial Hospital and the University of Chicago. Ser-

vices provided by the Clinical Research Office include clinical trial coordination, assistance with protocol development and investigational new drug applications, as well as, regulatory document submission.

The mission of the Clinical Data Management Office is to collect, analyze, and compile aggregate oncologic data for the purposes of epidemiological reporting and outcomes research for SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute faculty and physicians. Treatment and diagnosis information is gathered and available for identifying new patient populations that we need to target and for use in retrospective studies. Beneficial information can be derived from examining past treatment regimens and patient response. Services provided by the Clinical Data Management Office include basic data collection, reporting and statistical analysis.

What to look for in upcoming Newsletters

Spotlight on Trials. A short synopsis of a new or upcoming clinical trial

Research Education. A short synopsis of a point of interest regarding clinical research

The SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU website has a complete listing of clinical trials currently enrolling patients at SIU as well as other trials available in Springfield to patients through community oncology programs.

Future Directions.

The number of currently enrolling clinical trials will dramatically increase over the next several months through the consortium between Decatur Memorial Hospital, the University of Chicago Phase II Network, and the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute. We also intend to have more information about the services we offer on the website, as well as, a template for protocol development of investigator initiated studies. We encourage anyone who is interested in participating in clinical research, both patients and physicians, to contact our office for further information.

The Clinical Research office includes the following staff:

Susan Klug, RN, BSN, OCN (Research Nurse)

Sherry McAllister, RHIT, CTR (Data Manager)

Marlyn McQuern-Webb, RN, BSN (Research Nurse)

Kathy Robinson, PhD (Clinical Trials Coordinator)

Karol Young, LPN II (Melanoma Center Coordinator and Research Assistant)

Research

An important mission of the basic science unit is to achieve excellence in research and education, and to translate the laboratory findings into clinical studies to benefit cancer patients. The team has a very diverse range of research projects, from understanding basic mechanisms of cancer initiation and progression to therapeutic intervention and chemoprevention.

For example, Dr. Yin-Yuan Mo's laboratory has been working on how cellular factors involved in posttranscriptional or posttranslational modifications regulate gene expression and how deregulation of these processes lead to cancer such that they will be able to develop novel therapeutic agents. He has two major projects which are funded by the National Cancer Institute and the Department of Defense's Breast Cancer Research Program.

The first one is on the role of Ubc9 in tumorigenesis and drug resistance; the second one is about microRNA-mediated tumor growth.

Ubc9 is an E2 enzyme required for sumoylation, a posttranslational protein modification. Dr. Mo's laboratory has demonstrated that functional knockdown of Ubc9 reduces tumor growth as well as drug resistance. To better understand the underlying mechanism, they perform microarray analysis of tumor cells that express dominant negative mutant Ubc9 and found that many genes are regulated by Ubc9. Among them is the proto-oncogene *bcl-2*.

Further studies demonstrate that this Ubc9-regulated *bcl-2* expression is dependent on estrogen receptor status. Currently they are trying to dissect molecular events underlying Ubc9-mediated tumorigenesis and to determine whether specific Ubc9 siRNA can inhibit tumor growth as a potent therapeutic agent.

MicroRNAs are newly discovered small RNA molecules that regulate gene expression through mainly translational repression.

They found that several miRNAs are aberrantly

expressed in breast as well as other types of tumor tissues. For example, miRNA-21 is overexpressed while miRNA-205 is underexpressed in tumors. Furthermore, by using anti-sense ap-



proach, they demonstrate that anti-miRNA-21 substantially suppresses tumor growth in an animal model. They are currently investigating how anti-miRNA-21 leads to tumor suppression and screening for small chemical compounds that can inhibit miRNA-21 function. Ultimately, these compounds may develop into novel therapeutic agents for clinical trials.

In coming issues, we will introduce you to exciting research projects from different investigators of the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU.



Organ Site Working Groups

A multidisciplinary clinic (MDC) is a state-of-the-art approach to the management of certain cancers. The need for a MDC has never been greater in view of the increasing complexity of cancer treatment. Patients with cancer require interaction with multiple members of the health-care team. It is not unusual for patients to be seen by a surgeon, medical oncologist, radiation therapist, social worker, psychologist, pastoral care, and palliative care providers.

Traditionally, consultations in management were achieved with referrals made to each of these specialists in a sequential fashion. In a MDC, a coordinated patient consultation is provided by many of these specialists and care providers at one sitting and in a timely manner. In addition, each MDC is set up around a disease-specific orientation. At the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU, we have termed our MDC as “Organ Site Working Groups”. An MDC focuses on a specific cancer so that pa-

tients can have timely access to comprehensive care and “one-stop shopping”.

The MDC benefits the patient and the care team. The patient receives a treatment plan in a rapid and thorough manner. The care team is able to facilitate communication and optimize the patient’s care as well as recommend new treatment interventions such as a clinical trial. The



difficulty with a multidisciplinary clinic is the tremendous amount of staff coordination and time investment to make them function optimally. In a cancer center environment, these challenges are more readily overcome because of the close working proximity of all the necessary staff.

In a private practice or office setting, these difficulties are often insurmountable. A necessary

ingredient for this process is physician awareness of the critical nature of a MDC program. It is inherently less efficient for an individual physician to operate in an MDC than an outpatient setting seeing numerous patients within the same time frame. On the other hand, physician acceptance of the multidisciplinary clinic is achieved in a cancer center operation recognizing that the value of an MDC outweighs the inefficient time requirement.

Besides the routine participation of medical and surgical oncologists and radiation oncology, a typical MDC would include pathologists and specific other internal medicine specialties such as pulmonary, gastroenterology, or oral surgery depending upon the organ-specific needs.

In addition to physician and dental participation, other support service providers routinely employed in an MDC include case managers or nurse navigators, social workers and psychologists, research nurses and

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A multidisciplinary clinic (MDC) is a state-of-the-art approach to the management of certain cancers.

Organ Site Working Group

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clinical research associates, genetic counselors, nutritionists, stomatologists, rehabilitation specialists, pastoral care providers and sometimes financial counselors. Emerging data suggests multidisciplinary clinics do enhance patient outcomes and modern academic cancer centers

strive to continuously improve the operation of their multidisciplinary clinics.

We have currently functioning MDCs in the following disease-specific sites: Breast Cancer, Gynecologic Cancer, Head and Neck Cancer, Lung Cancer, Melanoma, and Prostate Cancer. In addition to these, we have Organ Site Working

Groups involved in planning MDCs in Urologic Cancer and Gastrointestinal Cancer. All of these MDCs have a research component. In coming additions of this newsletter, we will highlight specific activities of each of the SimmonsCooper Multidisciplinary Clinic Working Groups.

Outreach

When discussing outreach, the question is often asked, what exactly is outreach? Outreach is so many things and has so many parts to it. This makes it difficult to give one solid definition, but it is what makes outreach so exciting. The Outreach Program provides education, awareness and information to communities, which include organizations, patients, care givers, and the public. Outreach collaborates with the Simmon-

sCooper Cancer Institute at SIU clinical staff to coordinate screening and educational programs for communities. It ensures that communities' cancer needs are identified and facilitates meeting those needs by providing education, awareness information and linking to the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU clinical services.

During the past year and half, the outreach program has been busy in many areas. Activities

have focused on working with coalitions, partners across the state, data analysis, health screenings, planning for the new Learning Resource Center, Relay for Life, developing educational materials, implementing a web cast program and many other educational activities. The accomplishments are too many to go into detail in this first newsletter publication. In future issues, outreach

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Outreach

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activities will be highlighted.

For this issue, the Men's Night Out will be highlighted.

This year was the fourth annual Men's Night Out at SIU. This event has grown to serve 1,000 men. The Simmons Cooper Cancer Institute at SIU is a major sponsor for this event. The Outreach Program has been active in Men's Night Out by coordinating volunteers and organizing the health screenings. This year there were approximately 30 exhibits and screenings available to participants.

Approximately 850 men attended Men's Night Out. They enjoyed a catered dinner, health screenings, grilling demonstration, time with

friends, and chances to win great door prizes.

Ron Santo, former Chicago Cubs baseball player was the guest speaker. The men had the opportunity to hear Dr. Bussing speak on diet and exercise; Dr. Schwartz speak on men's urological issues and Dr. Tarter speak on prostate cancer. Mr. Santo then concluded the evening by talking about his life as a Cub and Sports Announcer.

It was another successful Men's Night Out for both the men who attended and the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU.

As the Cancer Institute continues to grow and expand, the Outreach Program will also continue to develop and offer new programs and services. We look for-

ward to sharing information in our future newsletters.

To learn more about the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU Outreach Program, visit our website at:
www.siumed.edu/cancer



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