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Leading gastrointestinal cancer expert joins IU Simon Cancer Center

April 8, 2014

INDIANAPOLIS -- A leading gastrointestinal cancer expert has joined the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center.

Bert Howard O'Neil, M.D., has been named the inaugural Joseph W. and Jackie J. Cusick Professor of Oncology and a professor of medicine at the Indiana University School of Medicine. He is also the Phase I director and director of the gastrointestinal cancer research program at the IU Simon Cancer Center, and he will represent the cancer center on the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium steering committee.

As the Phase I director, Dr. O'Neil will oversee clinical trials that are the necessary first step in testing a new cancer treatment in patients. Phase I studies test the best way to give a new treatment (for example, by mouth, intravenous infusion or injection) and the best dose.

Although Dr. O'Neil will oversee the program for all areas of cancer treatment, his area of expertise is in gastrointestinal cancers, with a particular concentration on pancreas, colorectal and hepatocellular carcinomas, a type of liver tumor. He has considerable expertise in targeting new drugs to specific molecular targets on tumors. This therapeutic individualization, in which treatments are tailored to individual patients and their cancer's unique "fingerprint," is one of the most promising areas of cancer research.

"Finding new and better agents to treat cancer, particularly gastrointestinal cancers, is a major focus of the IU Simon Cancer Center," Patrick J. Loehrer, director of the IU Simon Cancer Center, said. "There is no one that I know in the country who is better suited for this role than Dr. O'Neil. He is the complete package as he's both smart and dedicated."

Dr. O'Neil was most recently an associate professor of medicine and director of the gastrointestinal malignancies research program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also was the medical director of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center's clinical protocol office where he designed and conducted clinical and translational studies.

He is a member of the American Association of Cancer Research and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

He is a section reviewer for the journal Gastrointestinal Malignancies and an ad hoc reviewer for the Journal of Clinical Oncology, Cancer, Oncology, Lancet Oncology, Gastroenterology, American Journal of Oncology and the Annals of Oncology, among others. He presents regularly at national scientific meetings.

Dr. O'Neil earned his medical degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, and he completed his internal medicine residency and fellowship in hematology/oncology at the University of California, San

About the Cusick professorship

The Cusick professorship was established by Jackie J. Cusick in memory of her husband Joseph, who cofounded, co-owned and co-operated NCA Group. He was instrumental in building New Hope Presbyterian Church in Fishers, Ind., and was interested in advancing educational opportunities. It is the intent of the donor that the holder be involved in clinical or basic science research aimed at enhancing treatment for patients with gastrointestinal cancers.



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Media Contacts

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Cancer Research Day is May 29

The annual IU Simon Cancer Center Cancer Research Day is Thursday, May 29.

The day will begin with a two-hour symposium, Clinical and Translational Research in Breast Cancer. The symposium agenda is:

• 8-8:30 a.m.

Jill Fehrenbacher, PhD

"Studies to Identify the Mechanisms by Which Chemotherapeutics Cause Peripheral Neuropathy"

• 8:30-9 a.m.

Chunyan He, ScD

"Post-GWAS Functional Characterization of Breast Cancer Risk Lloci"

• 9-9:30 a.m.

Brenna McDonald, PsyD

"Neuroimaging Correlates of Breast Cancer and Treatment-Related Cognitive Symptoms: Current Findings and Future Directions"

• 9:30-10 a.m.

Diane Von Ah, PhD, RN

"Coping Strategies and Interventions for Cancer and Cancer Treatment-Related Cognitive Impairment: Current Research and Future Directions"



Cancer Center, will deliver the day's keynote address, "Cognitive Change Associated with Cancer and Cancer Treatments: Update on the State of the Science."

Tim A. Ahles, PhD, of Memorial Sloan Kettering

IU Simon Cancer Center Cancer Research Day is an annual event that aims to increase understanding and awareness of IU Simon Cancer Center research

endeavors and encourage collaboration with other cancer research institutions in Indiana.

At a glance

Cancer Research Day 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Thursday, May 29 IUPUI Campus Center, 420 University Blvd., Room CE 450 (multi-purpose room)

Clinical and Translational Research in Breast Cancer Symposium 8-10 a.m.

poster/abstract presentations 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (posters will be judged 10:30 a.m.- noon; presenters must be present)

keynote address with Dr. Tim A. Ahles 1:30-2:30 p.m.

awards presentation 2:30-3:30 p.m.

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News briefs

Applications open for Translational Cancer Biology Training Program

Pre-doctoral students interested in pursuing a career in cancer research can apply to the Translational Cancer Biology Training Program (TCBTP), which is designed to enhance the training received in any individual laboratory or department. Trainees are exposed to a broad range of cancer-related research encompassing both basic and clinical aspects of the disease. CBTP pre-doctoral students fulfill the requirements of their individual basic science departments and complete the cancer biology minor.

Pre-doctoral CBTP trainees attend both a basic science and a clinical seminar series, co-sponsored by the IU Simon Cancer Center, and participate and present in the monthly meeting of trainees and in the IU Simon Cancer Center's annual Cancer Research Day. For more info and to apply, visit http://cancer.iu.edu/education/training/cancer-biology/index.shtml. The application deadline is May 16.

Wanted: Mentors for Summer Research Program

Cancer center members are needed to serve as faculty mentors for the 2014 IU Simon Cancer Center Summer Research Program, which is May 30-July



25. By placing students with faculty mentors, students gain insight into a wide range of basic science, translational, and clinical research activities. Mentors facilitate and guide the students toward completing a research project, encourage students to explore the field of biomedical science, and provide students access to professional networks. Mentors receive \$1,000 toward the

purchase of lab supplies for the student(s) and project(s). Please contact Dr. **Hari Nakshatri** hnakshat@iupui.edu or Dr. **Rebecca Chan** rchan@iupui.edu for additional information.

Ethics at the Crossroads

The IU Center for Bioethics will present "Bioethics at the Crossroads: Where Public Health, Genomics, Data and Translational Science Meet" from 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Wednesday, May 7, in the IUPUI Campus Center Theater

(CE002). This conference will bring together some of the world's foremost authorities on ethical, legal, and social implications of science and society, and will highlight emerging issues arising from new genomic and health information technologies and their applications to health.

The event is supported by the Fairbanks School of Public Health Center for Health Policy; the Public Population Project in Genomics and Society; the Center for Law, Ethics and Applied Research in Health Information; the Center for Genetic Research Ethics and Law at Case Western University; BioShare.eu; and the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute.

To register, visit http://bioethics.iu.edu/n/elsireg-may7. Questions? Contact Eva Jackson at evajacks@iu.edu.

Hester Scholarship recipients announced

Richa Sharma and Jeff Gehlhausen have been named the 2014-15 Merilyn Hester Scholarship recipients.

Sharma, a third-year medical student, is a past participant in the Student Research Program in Academic Medicine (SRPinAM). She is also a former research fellow at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Gehlhausen, who has completed his second year of med school and is now working on his PhD, is a graduate student in **Wade Clapp**'s lab. He is also a volunteer with the IUSM Outreach Center, and he is a recipient of a Children's Tumor Foundation Young Investigator award.

The Hester Scholarship assists medical and/or PhD students pursuing degrees in biomedical sciences. The scholarship was created to assist students who have demonstrated an interest in and potential for conducting pediatric hematology or pediatric oncology research and who have not received any other type of scholarship or grant for the upcoming academic year.

Successful applicants are students who have a strong academic record, outstanding character and well-defined professional goals. Funding is up to \$8,000 a year with the number of awardees determined by the quality of applications and available funds in a given year.

Schug re-elected to NCI PAN

Michael Schug, communications manager at the IU Simon Cancer Center, has been re-elected to a second two-year term on the National Cancer Institute Public Affairs and Marketing Network (PAN) steering committee. PAN is a cooperative venture of academically-based, comprehensive, clinical, basic and consortium cancer centers as designated by the NCI. PAN works in close association with NCI's Office of Media Relations and Public Affairs to further public awareness of cancer research, prevention, detection, and treatment. The network was established to share information and resources among the communications and marketing professionals at cancer centers to enhance understanding of the nation's cancer research effort and to collectively address critical issues of common concern.

Cancer center members in the news

Kathy Miller, MD, and colleagues reported in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* on a Phase IIa study that characterized the safety and efficacy of two human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2)—targeted agents -- trastuzumab emtansine (T-DM1) and pertuzumab -- in patients with HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer (MBC). They concluded: "T-DM1 and pertuzumab can be combined at full doses with no unexpected toxicities. The preliminary efficacy in patients in the first-line and advanced MBC settings

warrants further investigation."



Einhorn

Lawrence Einhorn, MD, the physician-researcher who developed the cure for testicular cancer, has been elected a fellow of the American Association for Cancer Research. Dr. Einhorn was inducted into the American Association for Cancer Research Academy Class of 2014 during a ceremony April 4 in San Diego. The academy recognizes and honors distinguished scientists whose major scientific contributions have propelled significant innovation and progress against cancer. The fellows have been elected through a rigorous peer-review process that evaluates individuals on the basis of their stellar scientific achievements in cancer

research."Our 2014 class of fellows includes a number of the most prestigious laboratory researchers and physician-scientists who have contributed enormously to the cancer field. We look forward to celebrating their fundamental discoveries and contributions at this year's annual meeting," said Margaret Foti, PhD, MD, CEO of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Victoria Champion, PhD, RN, is one of 100 recipients of the IU School of Nursing's Alumni Legacy Leaders awards. Part of the School of Nursing's 100th anniversary celebration, the award recognizes the outstanding contributions of 100 of its alumni. The recipients demonstrate exceptional contributions to nursing through education, clinical practice, leadership, and/or research.

New members

Fredrick Asirwa, MBChB

Department of Hematology/Oncology

Affiliate member

Claire Burgardt, MD Department of Surgery Affiliate member

Anirban Mitra, PhD

Department of Medical and Molecular Genetics

Associate member, TMM

Ravi Sahu, PhD
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Associate member, TMM

C. Henrique Serezani, PhD Department of Microbiology and Immunology Full member HMI

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