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Dr. Travis leads IU Simon Cancer Center’s survivorship research efforts

Aug. 12, 2015

INDIANAPOLIS-- An internationally recognized expert on cancer survivorship will lead the development of a new research program at the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center.

Lois B. Travis, M.D., Sc.D., has been named the Lawrence H. Einhorn Professor of Cancer Research at the IU School of Medicine and director of the Cancer Survivorship Research Program at the IU Simon Cancer Center. She is also a member of the cancer center’s Cancer Prevention and Control research program, which focuses on prevention, early detection and survivorship.

Dr. Travis also will hold an academic appointment in the Department of Epidemiology at the IU Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health.

The new survivorship program will include research to predict who is susceptible to toxicities in cancer treatment and then alter treatment or develop preventive measures to protect the patient from long-term adverse side effects. The program will not only benefit testis cancer patients, but it has the potential to impact the nearly six million people worldwide eligible for treatment with a platinum-based agent each year for 12 other types of cancer.

Lawrence H. Einhorn, M.D., an IU Distinguished Professor and Livestrong Foundation Professor of Oncology at the IU School of Medicine, revolutionized cancer treatment more than 40 years ago when he combined the platinum-based cisplatin with two additional drugs. The combination became the cure for testicular cancer.

Because of advances in early detection and treatment, more and more people are cancer survivors. It is estimated that there are nearly 14 million American cancer survivors. However, for many, they suffer adverse side effects from their cancer treatments.

“Dr. Travis is an exceptional researcher, and because of her, the IU Simon Cancer Center is in a unique position to impact the future direction of cancer survivorship research here and elsewhere,” Patrick J. Loehrer, M.D., director of the IU Simon Cancer Center, said. “Not only will she lead the new survivorship program, but she will help us to increase the breadth and depth of our Cancer Prevention and Control research program. That’s a program that impacts all Hoosiers as we seek to educate our fellow citizens about prevention and early detection.”

In addition, Dr. Travis is the principal investigator of a National Institutes of Health study that is open at the IU Simon Cancer Center and other sites around the nation and Canada. The trial aims to identify genetic variants associated with cisplatin-related toxicities, and focuses on testicular cancer patients previously treated at the IU Simon Cancer Center and other major cancer centers. This group of patients is ideal to address these particular research questions, given their young age at diagnosis, curability and relative

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Lois B. Travis, M.D., Sc.D.

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uniformity of cisplatin-based chemotherapy.

Dr. Travis has assembled an international team of experts in oncology, neurology, hearing science, cardiology, statistical genetics, pharmacogenomics and other fields for this trial to better understand the long-term effects of cisplatin treatment not only for these patients, but other groups of survivors treated with cisplatin-based chemotherapy.

“I am greatly impressed by the IU Simon Cancer Center leadership and their commitment to creating an international center of excellence for cancer survivorship research,” Dr. Travis said. “This is appropriate since cisplatin-based chemotherapy to cure testicular cancer was introduced into clinical practice here in the 1970s. This is one of the landmark achievements in clinical oncology in the 20th century, and the platinum-based agents are now the most commonly used group of cytotoxic drugs worldwide. Moreover, the founder of this highly effective regimen, Dr. Larry Einhorn, remains actively engaged in clinical research.”

Previously, Dr. Travis was the director of the Rubin Center for Cancer Survivorship and chief of the Division of Cancer Survivorship at the University of Rochester Medical Center. She also was a senior principal investigator and lead research investigator at the National Cancer Institute, where for nearly 20 years she conducted international studies of late treatment effects in cancer survivors, with an emphasis on second malignant neoplasms.

Dr. Travis earned her medical degree from the University of Florida College of Medicine, completed her training at the Mayo Clinic, and obtained a Master of Science in epidemiology and a Doctor of Science in epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health. She is a member of the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Medical Association, the American College of Epidemiology and the American Society for Clinical Oncology among others.

Dr. Travis was recruited to IU, in part, through the Physician Scientist Initiative. The Physician Scientist Initiative, funded by a \$60 million gift from the Lilly Endowment, promotes basic and translational medical science research through the recruitment and training of physician-scientists and investments in biobanking, international programs and research systems.

About the Lawrence H. Einhorn Professor of Cancer Research

Philanthropy played a critical role in bringing Dr. Travis to the IU Simon Cancer Center. The chair was funded with a \$2 million gift from Farhad Moshiri of Monaco. Nearly \$2 million was raised from grateful patients nationally to support her recruitment in addition to Mr. Moshiri’s generosity.

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Cancer center volunteers help secure lawn equipment

By Michael Schug

Earlier this summer, staff from the IU Simon Cancer Center's Clinical Trials Office ventured a couple of miles off campus to perform a volunteer project at the SON (Serving Others' Needs) Foundation – a foundation that provides lodging for cancer patients and their loved ones.

“The CTO staff came at the beginning of June and did a variety of projects around the house,” Denise Jacobson of the foundation explained. “They helped weed the garden, mow the lawn, paint the fence, and clean the interior of the house. They were a tremendous help as our guests are often in and out of the house to travel back and forth to the IU Simon Cancer Center. The house gives the patients a feel of home away from home. The CTO volunteers helped to keep the SON Foundation house beautiful for our guests.”

While volunteering there, some of the CTO staff realized the foundation had a real need for lawn equipment.

CTO staffer Eric Borchardt in particular noticed the need after he volunteered to cut the grass. Denise rolled out a lawn mower that belonged to her family for Eric to use. Denise had been using her family's lawn mower since both it and the snow blower that had been donated to the foundation were no longer working.

After volunteering that day, Eric soon got the ball rolling by contacting his father, Dale. Eric asked his dad, who lives in Greenleaf, Wisc., if he would be willing to bring his tools down to Indianapolis during his next visit and look at the equipment. His dad quickly agreed to do so but also wanted to look into something.

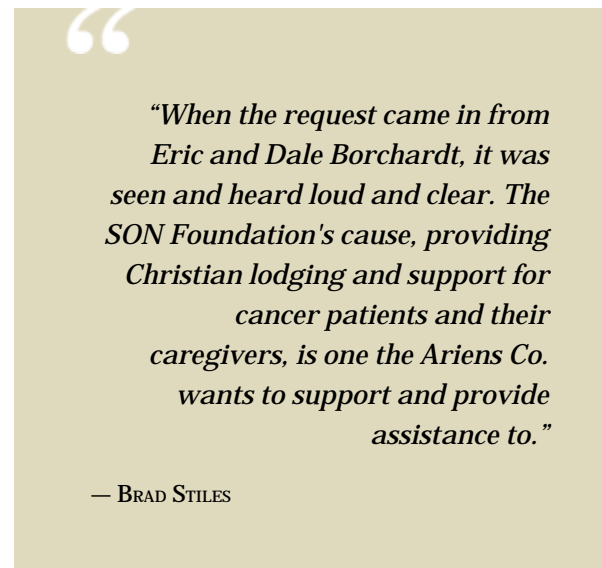
It turns out that Dale reached out to his employer, Ariens. Ariens manufactures lawn equipment.

Dale asked his son to send more information about the **SON Foundation** and the **Clinical Trials Office**.

Eric crafted an e-mail to Ariens. “I wrote about how clinical trials of today equate to the cures of tomorrow,” Eric explained. “I used the example of how Dr. Eihorn's idea 40 years ago on how to cure testis cancer is now the standard treatment that has saved lives. I also described what it takes to be on a clinical trial and that some patients need to come here every day for extended periods of time.”

Shortly thereafter, Brad Stiles, a district manager at Ariens, called Eric.

“When the request came in from Eric and Dale Borchardt, it was seen and heard loud and clear,” Stiles said. “The SON Foundation's cause, providing Christian lodging and support for cancer patients and their caregivers, is one the Ariens Co. wants to support and provide assistance to.”



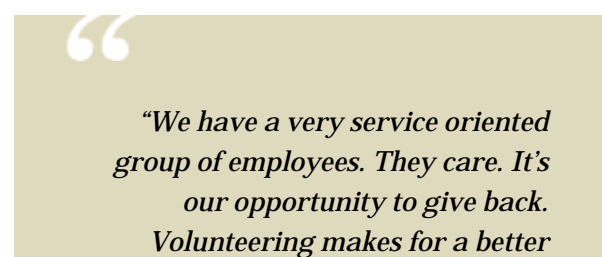
Ariens graciously agreed to donate a lawn mower and a snow blower, valued around \$900. Staff from the Clinical Trials Office and representatives from Ariens presented the equipment to the SON Foundation on Aug. 4.

“The SON Foundation has already taken away the burden of finding and paying for a hotel room for these men and women. We just wanted to help make their stay be the best it can possibly be,” Brad said.

“We are so very grateful for this donation from Ariens, as well as the donation of many service hours of volunteer work from the IU Simon Cancer Center’s Clinical Trials Office,” Denise said. “Without the generous hearts of others, we wouldn’t be serving the guests that are in need.”

Throughout the year, the CTO staff – which includes study coordinators, research nurses, finance and regulatory personnel -- typically performs four volunteer projects as a way to give back to the community.

“We have a very service oriented group of employees,” Kerry Bridges, the CTO administrator, said. “They care. It’s our opportunity to give back. Volunteering makes for a better and happier work place, and it’s all about team building.”



*and happier work place, and it's all
about team building."*

— KERRY BRIDGES

The group has performed service projects at the Ronald McDonald House and Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana among others.

On Fridays most of the CTO staff wears jeans, contributing \$1 to do so. Overall, about \$1,000 is collected each year from those who wear jeans. The employees decide which organization or charity to donate the funds to, spreading out the \$1,000 among the four charities.

"I have only been here at the Clinical Trials Office since March 2014 and will never pass on an opportunity to participate in a volunteer activity," Eric said. "Last year, I went along to Gleaners to help sort donated food and prepare it for shipment to their many distribution points."

He added: "I plan to stay in contact with the SON Foundation and do everything I can to help them focus on the people that use their service, so they don't have to worry about things such as yard equipment."



Staff from the Clinical Trials Office join representatives from the SON Foundation and Ariens for a presentation of lawn equipment to the foundation.



News briefs

Save the date: IUSCC hosts Walther retreat Oct. 17

The IU Simon Cancer Center hosts the Walther retreat from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday Oct. 17. Breakfast and registration begin at 7:30 a.m. The meeting's focus is to discuss translational bioinformatics/lipid metabolism and obesity in cancer as well as building collaborative research efforts between IU, Purdue, and Notre Dame in these areas. All cancer center members are encouraged to attend. Please RVSP to Kristen Scott at kscott4@iupui.edu. The retreat will be at the [Ritz Charles](#), 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel.

Indiana CTSI 7th Annual Meeting and Watanabe Prize Lecture

The seventh annual meeting of the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute and awarding of the second Watanabe Prize in Translational Research is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, at [Hine Hall](#) on the IUPUI campus.

This year's Watanabe Prize winner and the meeting's keynote speaker will be Carl H. June, M.D., the Richard W. Vague Professor in Immunotherapy and Director of the Center for Cellular Immunotherapies in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. June is an internationally recognized translational researcher and clinician who has led the development and testing of novel forms of immunotherapy in cancer and chronic infections, making seminal contributions in determining mechanisms of lymphocyte activation.

The Watanabe Prize in Translational Research presented by the Indiana CTSI and the IU



School of Medicine recognizes a member of the scientific or medical community who has achieved outstanding accomplishments in translational research. As the recipient, Dr. June will spend

several days in Indiana to share his knowledge with audiences at the IU School of Medicine and partner institutions. The Indiana CTSI annual meeting will also highlight two outstanding young investigators named Watanabe Translational Scholars. They will present a brief overview of their research during the event and will be mentored by Dr. June over the next two years.

[Click here](#) to access a draft of the full agenda and register to attend the meeting.

IUSM Spirit Store launches Aug. 31

The IU School of Medicine launches its Spirit Store on Monday, Aug. 31. Show your IU School of Medicine pride with accessories and attire from the store. Orders can be placed from Aug. 31 to Sept. 11. At the end of the season, all orders received will be processed, shipped, and delivered. Estimated delivery date is Sept. 29 and the flat-rate delivery fee is just \$5. The IU School of Medicine Spirit Store will re-open in early November with new fall merchandise. If you have questions about the ordering process or suggestions for Spirit Store inventory, connect with us at iusm@iu.edu. [Start shopping](#).

Cancer center members in the news

- **Hongmei Nan**, MD, PhD, has received a Junior Investigator Award from the International Aspirin Foundation. Recipients were chosen from research centers in Europe, Australia, and America for their standard of work. Dr. Nan and her colleagues previously identified genetic markers that may help determine who benefits from regular use of aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for lowering one's risk of developing colorectal cancer. [See news release](#).

- **Lois Travis**, MD, ScD, and colleagues wrote "Cardiovascular Disease Mortality After Chemotherapy or Surgery for Testicular Nonseminoma: A Population-Based Study," which was published in the [Journal of Clinical Oncology](#).



Imperiale

- **Thomas Imperiale**, MD, **Patrick Monahan**, PhD, and colleagues wrote "Derivation and Validation of a Scoring System to Stratify Risk for Advanced Colorectal Neoplasia in Asymptomatic Adults: A Cross-sectional Study," which was published in the [Annals of Internal Medicine](#). The researchers have developed a five-variable index aimed at identifying which individuals in the average-risk spectrum for advanced colorectal neoplasia can skip colonoscopy in favor of less invasive screening.

- The National Institutes of Health and the National Human Genome Research Institute have announced that **David Flockhart**, MD, PhD, has been elected chair of the [Implementing GeNomics In PracTice \(IGNITE\) Network](#). Dr. Flockhart's research is focused on the implementation of personalized medicine as a means of improving therapeutics within short time frames. He also is the co-principal investigator of the INGENIOUS (**IN**diana **Ge**nomics **Im**plementation an **O**pportunity for the **U**nder**S**erved) part of the IGNITE network, and the NIGMS-funded clinical pharmacology training program at IU. Dr. Flockhart will be a primary spokesperson for the network and will help to direct and consolidate the overall strategic initiatives associated with the genomic research performed at each of the six research sites. The formation of IGNITE was driven by the need to accelerate the pace of incorporating patients' genomic information into clinical care and to carefully evaluate implementation efforts. The goal of the program is to enhance the use of genomic medicine by supporting the development of methods for incorporating genomic information into clinical care and exploration of the methods for effective implementation, diffusion, and sustainability in diverse clinical settings.

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