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IU Simon Cancer Center Joins Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium

May 31, 2013

INDIANAPOLIS – In athletics, the Big Ten universities compete against each other, but now many will join together against a common foe: cancer.

Leaders from the universities' cancer centers will kick off the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium on June 1 in Chicago. They are uniting to transform cancer research through collaborative oncology trials that leverage the scientific and clinical expertise of the Big Ten universities.

"Tremendous strengths exist in the cancer centers of the Big Ten," said Patrick J. Loehrer Sr., M.D., director of the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center. "This is a rare opportunity for the universities to work together as part of a regional team science initiative to advance cancer research. The advantage of this, particularly during a time of austerity for research, is that we can build upon the strengths of the institutions and fortify some of the shortcomings. This allows us to be lean, efficient but, most importantly, collaborative."

Steven T. Rosen, M.D., director of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, added: "By uniting to transform cancer research through collaborative oncology trials, we will be able to leverage the scientific and clinical expertise of the Big Ten Universities. The consortium will benefit patients because researchers will work together to turn ideas into potential new treatments. I view this as the beginning of a broad spectrum of potential research, training and care initiatives that will benefit our patients and society."

The clinical trials that will be developed will be linked to molecular diagnostics, enabling researchers to understand what drives the cancers to grow and what might be done to stop them from growing.

Also, the consortium forms a powerful collaboration because of the impact each university already has made in cancer research and the solid research infrastructure already in place at each university. The consortium also leverages geographical locations and existing relationships among the cancer centers.

"For research to be truly impactful, we must work together," said Maha Hussain, M.D., FACP, associate director of clinical research at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center. "Collaborating with other institutions gives us another opportunity for a broader and deeper brain trust while allowing implementation of novel ideas in a more representative patient population. The synergy, the collaboration, the implementation all are aimed at one ultimate goal -- making a real difference for patients."


The Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium creates a unique team-research culture in which cancer leaders will collaborate with and mentor the research leaders of tomorrow with the goal of improving the lives of all cancer patients. The consortium will provide junior faculty and fellows the opportunity to write, conduct and complete trials, which would not normally be done at a single institution or on a national level for young investigators.

"A critical byproduct of the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium will be the creation of a new arena for junior faculty cancer researchers to design and lead potential practice-changing cancer studies," said Noah Hahn, M.D., executive officer of the consortium, associate professor of medicine at IU School of Medicine and a researcher at the IU Simon Cancer Center. "Opportunities for junior faculty to lead clinical trials have been evaporating in recent years, but the consortium aims to intentionally promote junior faculty participation and leadership in all trials under appropriate senior faculty guidance and mentorship in an effort to address those decreasing opportunities."


The following universities and cancer centers comprise the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium:

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Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium Logo


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Big Ten universities form Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium

Newscenter

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- Indiana University (Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center)
- Northwestern University (Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center)
- Penn State University (Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute)
- Purdue University (Purdue University Center for Cancer Research)
- Rutgers University (The Cancer Institute of New Jersey becomes part of Rutgers on July 1)
- University of Illinois (University of Illinois Cancer Center)
- University of Iowa (Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center)
- University of Michigan (University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center)
- University of Minnesota (Masonic Cancer Center)
- University of Nebraska (Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center)
- University of Wisconsin (Carbone Comprehensive Cancer Center)

The Indianapolis-based Hoosier Oncology Group will serve as the administrative headquarters for the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium. Since 1984, Hoosier Oncology Group has initiated more than 150 trials with more than 4,000 patients.

About the Big Ten

The **Big Ten Conference** is an association of world-class universities whose member institutions share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service. Founded in 1896, the Big Ten has sustained a comprehensive set of shared practices and policies that enforce the priority of academics in student-athletes' lives and emphasize the values of integrity, fairness and competitiveness. The broad-based athletic programs of the 12 Big Ten institutions sponsor more than 300 teams competing for championships in 25 official conference sports, 12 for men and 13 for women. Big Ten universities provide in excess of \$136 million in athletic scholarship aid to more than 8,200 men and women student-athletes, the most of any conference.

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May/June 2013

News briefs

Cancer Research Day winners announced

The IU Simon Cancer Center hosted its annual Cancer Research Day on May 22. Students, fellows, and faculty conducting cancer research at IUPUI, Indiana University-Bloomington, Purdue University, and the Harper Cancer Research Institute, a collaboration between the IU School of Medicine and the University of Notre Dame, presented their research posters. Cash awards were given for best poster(s) in each research category, by group. [View list of winners.](#)



Patrick Loehrer, MD, (left) presents the Stephen D. Williams Lectureship Award to **Anil Sood, MD**, of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center during Cancer Research Day. Dr. Sood was this year's keynote speaker. The late Dr. Williams was the founding director of the IU Simon Cancer Center. The award is a replica of "Luminary." Designed by Jeff Laramore 2nd Globe Studios, Luminary serves as the cancer center's cornerstone at Michigan Street and University Boulevard. The central sphere is constructed of onyx -- credited by some with the power to increase regeneration and foster new recognition of personal strengths.

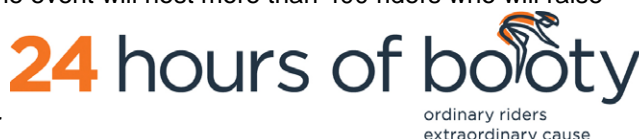
Reminders

●Missed a Combined Seminar Series?

Have you missed a Combined Seminar Series? You can now watch it online. An archival listing of past Seminar Series events is [here](#). Also, you can find the current lineup of speakers [here](#).

24 Hours of Booty returns

●24 Hours of Booty is back for a second year in Indianapolis. The Booty Loop will be held at Butler University June 28-29. The event will host more than 400 riders who will raise more than \$200,000 for cancer research and survivorship. The IU Simon Cancer Center has been chosen as the local beneficiary for this event. For more information, check out www.24hoursofbooty.org.



●IUSCC's Cancer Center Support Grant due in fall 2013

In September 2013, the IU Simon Cancer Center's National Cancer Institute Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) will be due. Consequently, the cancer center's executive committee and research program leaders are currently undertaking a critical review of the program and its membership, as well as finalizing program themes, goals and aims. All members are encouraged to assist their program leaders as they begin working on their respective narratives. The program leaders will need assistance from their members on compiling research highlights for those narratives. Program leaders are also planning retreats and participation among members is important. The CCSG is an important source of funding for the cancer center's shared facilities. This support, along with IU Simon Cancer Center funding, assures that cancer center members have access to the highest quality technology for their research.



●Membership changes

Membership criteria into the IU Simon Cancer Center has changed to include full-time faculty of any Indiana university who contribute on some level to the cancer center's mission of research, education, patient care and community outreach. Full membership criteria is [here](#).

●Researchers: Share your news

Is your research about to be published in a journal? Are you about to present your research at a professional meeting? Have you received national funding for your research? Share your news with [Michael Schug](#), IUSCC communications manager.

●Funding opportunities

For the latest funding opportunities, visit <http://www.cancer.iu.edu/research/funding/>.



Matthew Shew (fourth-year medical student) and Richa Sharma (third-year medical student) are recipients of the William J. Wright Scholarships. The scholarships are awarded by the IU Simon Cancer Center to third- and fourth-year medical students, physicians in cancer-related postdoctoral programs and/or medical doctors employed by IUSM and pursuing cancer-related fellowship training who demonstrate commitment to, or potential for, conducting cancer research as well as outstanding character and well-defined professional goals.

Cancer center members in the news

- **Douglas Rex**, MD, was honored by the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) and the ASGE Foundation as the 2013 recipient of the Rudolf V. Schindler Award. The award, ASGE's highest honor, highlights Rex's accomplishments and endoscopic research, teaching and service to ASGE which exemplify the standards and traditions of Rudolf Schindler, MD, founder of the American Gastroscopic Club, the forerunner of ASGE. Dr. Rex's major research interests have been in colorectal disease and, in particular, colorectal cancer screening and the technical performance of colonoscopy. He co-authored the colorectal cancer screening recommendations of the American College of Gastroenterology and those of the Gastroenterology Consortium.
- **Lindsey Mayo**, PhD, received a 2013 Trustee Teaching Award during the IU School of Medicine's May 11 commencement ceremony. The IU Board of Trustees established this award to recognize outstanding teaching and to emphasize the primacy of learning and of our learners in the medical school. Nominations were solicited from students, residents and faculty and were reviewed by the Teaching Awards Committee.
- IUPUI Chancellor Charles R. Bantz recently bestowed the distinguished appointment of Chancellor's Professor to three outstanding faculty, including **Asok Antony**, MD. Dr. Antony is a recognized leader in folic acid, folate physiology and folate malnutrition research. Antony teaches hematology at the IU School of Medicine. The Chancellor's Professor is the most notable appointment a faculty member can attain at IUPUI. It recognizes senior faculty members who display a record of extensive accomplishment and leadership in teaching, research and

campus/professional service.

- **Rudolph Navari**, MD, PhD, associate dean and director of IUSM-South Bend, received a \$2.1 million grant for a national study to address chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. The four-year study, funded by the National Cancer Institute, will determine the efficacy of the anti-psychotic olanzapine to reduce nausea and vomiting among patients undergoing chemotherapy. The study will build on clinical trials done by Navari that demonstrated that olanzapine -- available for about 45 cents a dose -- is highly effective in reducing some of the debilitating effects of chemotherapy. In the NCI study, physicians of breast and patients across the country will administer a protocol that pairs olanzapine with other medicines to be given prior to chemotherapy, then screen for nausea and vomiting.
- **Edward F. Srou**, PhD, has been awarded a research grant offered by the world's largest professional hematological organization to augment a decrease in National Institutes of Health grants.

[more](#) 

New members

[Constantine Albany](#), MD

Department of Medicine

Affiliate member

[Jeffrey Buchsbaum](#), MD, PhD, AM

Department of Radiation Oncology, Pediatrics and Neurological Surgery

Affiliate member

[Richard Frankel](#), PhD

General internal medicine

Affiliate member

[Noriyoshi Kurihara](#), DDS, PhD

Department of Medicine

Full member, [Hematopoiesis, Malignant Hematology, Immunology](#)

[Mark McDonald](#), MD

Department of Radiation Oncology

Affiliate member

[Kevin McMullen](#), MD

Department of Radiation Oncology

Affiliate member

[Zachary Schafer](#), PhD

University of Notre Dame

Associate member, [Breast Cancer](#)

[Jodi Skiles](#), MD, MS

Department of Pediatrics

Associate member, [Experimental and Developmental Therapeutics](#)

Membership updates

[Peter Hollenhorst](#), PhD

Department of Medical Sciences

Full member, [Tumor Microenvironment and Metastases](#)

[Rudolph Navari](#), MD, PhD

IUSM-South Bend

Full member, [Cancer Prevention and Control](#)