

# News from the Texas Cancer Genetics Network

at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

Department of Cancer Genetics • 1515 Holcombe Boulevard, Unit 209 • Houston • TX • 77030

## Greetings from the Texas Cancer Genetics Network

**THANK YOU** for your continued participation in the Texas Cancer Genetics Network study at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. We are one of eight major research centers of the Cancer Genetics Network (CGN) throughout the United States, working together to create a registry of individuals with a personal and/or family history of cancer. Your participation is helping scientists to learn more about genetics and cancer and ultimately, to better detect, prevent, and treat cancer in the future.

As done in the past, we would like to keep in contact with you to update your personal and family information. I am happy to announce that in the near future, you will be able to access your follow-up questionnaire on the Internet. Once the website is operational, you will receive instructions on how to access the website to update your information. Hard copies of the Follow-up questionnaires will continue to be available.

With your help, this unique cancer registry program will continue to contribute significantly to our understanding of the causes of cancer. We appreciate your participation and your willingness to help us in the fight against cancer.

**Together we are “Making Cancer History®”**

Sincerely,  
 Louise C. Strong, M.D.  
 Sue and Radcliffe Killam Chair



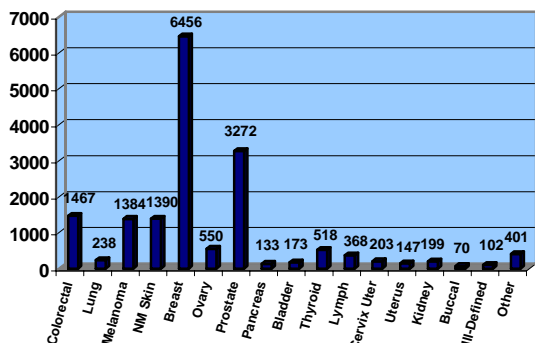
## Update on the Cancer Genetics Network (CGN)

Since CGN began in 1999, eight centers across the U.S. have worked together to recruit over **23,000** participants for this important research effort aimed at understanding the factors that contribute to cancer in families and improve cancer screening practices. This national collaboration makes possible research that a single institution could not carry out alone.

The graph below shows the different types of cancer reported among our CGN participants. Breast and prostate cancers are the most commonly reported types.

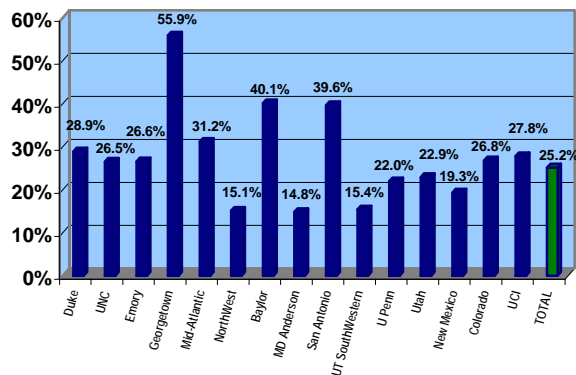
About 9,000 of our participants have not had a personal diagnosis of cancer. Their participation in the CGN stems from the experiences of family members and their concern for the future of cancer research.

**Number of Participants by Cancer Type\***  
 Single and Multiple Primary Tumors



\*N = 17,071 Tumors. Probands with multiple tumors are counted for each cancer type.

**Percentage of CGN Subjects Participating in CGN Research Studies by Site**



## Research Study Update

### Breast Screening Study

Through a collaborative effort between the CGN and the International Breast MRI Consortium, 195 women were enrolled over a six month period in a prospective study of screening mammography, MRI and ultrasound in asymptomatic women 25 years of age and older who were at high risk for developing hereditary breast cancer. A total of six cancers were diagnosed, with MRI detecting all six cancers, while mammography detected two and ultrasound detected one cancer. These results have been presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and have been submitted for publication.

### Ovarian Cancer Screening Study

More than 2200 subjects at high risk for ovarian cancer have enrolled in this study during the last four years. Women who have advanced ovarian cancer have higher levels of a chemical called CA125 in their blood. This study examines whether periodic testing of CA125 levels in high-risk women could help with the early detection of ovarian cancer. Early detection can help with more effective treatment of ovarian cancer and improve survival.

### Colon Cancer Sibpair Study

The CGN, through funding from the NCI, recently completed a pilot study of genes in brothers and sisters who have colon cancer. The goal of the study is to identify colon cancer genes by studying the variation of DNA sequences (genes) in affected sibling pairs. Researchers will also examine links between colon cancer and influences such as lifestyle habits and environmental factors. To date, 274 individuals have participated in this study. We have identified regions in the genes that are shared more often by those with colon cancer. There is still much work to be done because there are 40 genes in this genetic region that will need to be studied. Thank you to those who are participating in this important ongoing research.

### Prostate Gene Discovery Study

This study is funded by the NCI and is being conducted at seven institutions nationwide. The goal of this study is to characterize and obtain biological specimens from individuals with early onset prostate cancer (age at diagnosis of less than 65 years) and their family members, as well as a series of high-risk families. Enrollment to this study has recently closed and data analysis is in progress. Nationwide recruitment efforts have been impressive, with 1,011 prostate cancer cases and 369 family members enrolled. Biospecimens from 1,167 individuals have been obtained. Focus will now be on identifying the prostate cancer susceptibility genes and their possible interactions with lifestyle and environmental risk factors. Thanks to all of you who have participated.

### FHPP (Family Health Promotion Project)

Researchers at the University of Colorado are conducting this national study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health to study and improve cancer screening behaviors in families affected by colon cancer. Future programs may help families at high-risk obtain important information about cancer screening options.

### GEMS (Genetic and Environmental Modifiers Study)

Researchers at Duke University have launched this study to find environmental and genetic factors that influence the risk of getting breast cancer in women who have mutations in the BRCA1 and/or BRCA2 genes. An alteration in these genes increases the chance of developing breast cancer and ovarian cancer. In the future, such research may lead to tailored screening and treatment programs based on a deeper understanding of breast cancer genetics. If you have had breast cancer and have had genetic testing for the BRCA 1/2 genes, you may be eligible for this study.

## Know your family history

Health information about you and your relatives is called your family history. It is important for everyone to know their family history as this knowledge can help lower your risk of disease. Family members share genes and often have similar environments, lifestyles, and habits. You may ask, "I can't change my genes, so why should I bother knowing my family history?" Even though you cannot change your genetic makeup, you can change your behaviors. Most common human diseases result from interaction of genes with environmental and behavioral factors that CAN be changed, such as exercising, eating right and quitting smoking. If you know your family history, then you and your health care provider can discuss how to lower your risk for disease.

Although most Americans understand that their family health history is important to their own health, only one-third of us actively collect this information. To help with this, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released a new, free computer program that organizes important health information that you can share with your health care provider. This program is called, "My Family Health Portrait," and is available at: <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/>.

We encourage you to take some time at your next family gathering to discuss your family history. It may not be the most comfortable subject, but it may provide information to help you decrease your risk for cancer and many other common diseases, and that is definitely comforting.

## Stay in Touch!

**Please keep us informed** of any changes in your health or the health of any of your family members, including recent medical procedures or findings, new cancer diagnoses, and deaths, as well as changes of contact information.



**When you receive our follow-up mailing**, it is important to respond even if there are no changes. With your help in keeping our records current, our registry will continue to be a resource for cancer research.

**If you have any questions, please contact:**  
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