

Division Steadily Expands Cadre of Clinical Trials

The Division of Pediatrics has been expanding its cadre of clinical trials in the past year to include those only available at MD Anderson, and other agents offered at so few institutions that it makes us the closest facility for hundreds of miles. Among our “only here” trials is a phase I study (2015-0720) of aerosol gemcitabine in patients with solid tumors and pulmonary metastases. The study, which is the result of preclinical data generated by **Nancy Gordon, MD**, assistant professor in Pediatrics-Research, allows patients to inhale the medication. It is open to patients 12- to 50-years-old. The principal investigator is **Najat Daw, MD**, professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care. Two patients have enrolled since the study opened in November. Another “only here” trial takes the unique approach of going into the kitchen to offer acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) patients a diet of foods with less than 10 percent sugar and 25 percent or less fat to reduce weight gain as they receive prednisone and/or dexamethasone during therapy. The one-year behavioral intervention study (2010-0654) is open to patients who are seven to 18-years-old. So far, 10 are enrolled. The food selected for the trial comes from Children's Cancer Hospital's e-cookbook, found at www.mdanderson.org/recipe. The meals are

prepared at the Bionutrition Research Core Kitchen in the Mays Building and transported to the Ronald McDonald House kitchen to provide convenient access for our patients.



8-year-old Aleah taste tests a low-sugar/low-fat version of a frozen pineapple coconut bar as part of the trial. She gave it a thumbs up because she wouldn't mind eating it at home. Some items received a thumbs down or a sideways thumb—because they were just 'okay.'

The Patient-Reported Outcomes, Survey and Population Research (PROSPR Core) and **Kris Frost, MD**, pediatrics school coordinator, creates 30-minute exercise routines for the kids, while **Karla Crawford, LD, RD, MS, MPH**, research dietitian, questions and receives taste test responses from the kids. The principal investigator is **Joya Chandra, PhD**, associate professor in Pediatrics-Research. To learn more about the range of our pediatric clinical trials, log onto www.mdanderson.org/pediatrics and select 'Clinical Trials' on the left-hand side.

Li Wins Research Grant to Study Options to Detect & Target Neuroblastoma CTCs



Congratulations to **Shulin Li, PhD**, professor in Pediatrics-Research, for winning a \$150,000 grant from the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation (PCRF) to support his study of circulating tumor cells.

Neuroblastoma is a cancer of immature cells found in the nervous system and mostly occurs in the nerve tissue of the adrenal glands near the kidneys,

but also in the chest, neck, or pelvis. Occasionally it develops in utero.

Li and his team developed a liquid biopsy tool that uses the cell surface vimentin (CSV) protein as a marker for circulating tumor cells. If found, this protein could be a predictor for future or hidden disease that would require further treatment. Li did a video for the PCRF's website, which can be seen [here](#).

Several faculty members published manuscripts as *first* or *last* authors in journals since November 2017. They are:



Joya Chandra, PhD

- Nilsa Rivera-Del Valle, Tiewei Cheng, Mary Irwin, Hayley Donnell, Melissa Singh, Joya Chandra. "Combinatorial effects of histone deacetylase inhibitors (HDACi), vorinostat and entinostat, and adaphostin are characterized by distinct redox alterations." *Cancer Chemother Pharmacol*. 2018 Jan 8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00280-017-3509-0>



Nancy Gordon, MD

- Janice M. Santiago-O'Farrill, Eugenie S. Kleinerman, Mario G. Hollomon, Andrew Livingston, Wei-Lien Wang, Jen-Wei Tsai, and Nancy B. Gordon. "Phosphorylated heat shock protein 27 as a potential biomarker to predict the role of chemotherapy-induced autophagy in osteosarcoma response to therapy." *Oncotarget*. 2018; 9:1602-1616. <https://doi.org/10.18632/oncotarget.20308>



Jiemiao Hu, PhD

- Jiemiao Hu, Chuang Sun, Chantale Bernatchez, Xueqing Xia, Patrick Hwu, Gianpietro Dotti, Shulin Li. "T Cell Homing Therapy for Reducing Regulatory T Cells and Preserving Effector T Cell Function in Large Solid Tumors." *Clin Cancer Res*. 2018 Feb 1. pii: clincanres.1365.2017. 10.1158/1078-0432.CCR-17-1365



Eugenie Kleinerman, MD

- Eugenie S. Kleinerman, Ling Yu, Jasmine Dao, Andrea A. Hayes-Jordan, Brock Lindsey, Jitesh D. Kawedia, John Steward, Nancy Gordon. "Aerosol Gemcitabine after Amputation Inhibits Osteosarcoma Lung Metastases, but Not Wound Healing." *Hindawi Sarcoma*, Vol 2018, Article ID 3143096. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/3143096>.



Shulin Li, PhD

- Heming Li, Qing H. Meng, Hyangsoon Noh, Izhar Singh Batth, Neeta Somaiah, Keila E. Torres, Xueqing Xia, Ruoyu Wang, Shulin Li c,. "Detection of circulating tumor cells from cryopreserved human sarcoma peripheral blood mononuclear cells." *Cancer Lett*. 2017 Sep 10;403:216-223. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28652021>
- Heming Li, Qing H. Meng, Hyangsoon Noh, Neeta Somaiah, Keila E. Torres, Xueqing Xia, Izhar S. Batth, Cissimol P. Joseph, Mengyuan Liu, Ruoyu Wang, Shulin Li . "Cell-surface vimentin-positive macrophage-like circulating tumor cells as a novel biomarker of metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumors." <https://doi.org/10.1080/2162402X.2017.1420450>

ASH, AACR Annual Meeting Updates

Two division faculty presented posters at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) in December 2017.

- **Sajad Khazal, MD**, assistant professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, "Allogeneic Blood and Marrow Transplantation for Pediatric Patients w/Sickle Cell Anemia: An Institutional Experience."
- **Harjeet Singh, PhD**, instructor in Pediatrics-Research, "Long Term Follow-up after Adoptive Transfer of CD19-Specific CAR+ T Cells Genetically Modified Via Non-Viral Sleeping Beauty System after Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant."

Several faculty will travel to Chicago for the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Cancer Researchers (AACR) in April. Among them:

- **Fei Wang, PhD**, postdoctoral fellow in Pediatrics-Research, will present her paper, "Effect of Exercise on Acute and Late Onset Doxorubicin-Induced Cardiotoxicity." Scheduled co-presenters are **Keri Schadler, PhD**, **Joya Chandra, PhD**, and **Eugenie Kleinerman, MD**.

CAC: Well-Deserved Praise for Earning Great Patient Satisfaction Scores



Written by Kevin Long, MBA, Dir., Pediatric Operations

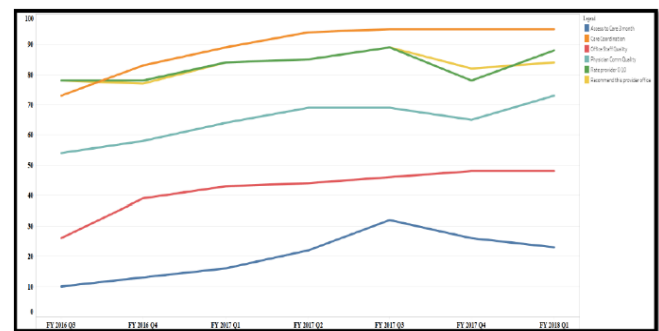
Congratulations to the Child and Adolescent Center (CAC) on their great patient satisfaction scores for the past six months. The charts tell the story but may leave some wondering what it all means. CGCAHPS stands for the *Clinician and Group Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems*. This tool is a standardized way to measure patients' perception of care in a clinic setting. The survey tool is administered on our behalf by the Press Ganey group.

Surveys returned by patients are analyzed and the results are given to us for review. The *Top Box* score represents the number of respondents that gave the best score to each question and domain. Domain is a grouping of like questions which allows the user to focus on areas of improvement, such as 'access to care.' The Percentile Peer Rank is the measure of how our Top Box score compares with our peer group. Each question and domain can have a vast difference between Top Box and Peer Rank scores depending on how the peer group performed during that time period. Looking at one month or one quarter can be misleading as the scores tend to fluctuate wildly. To really understand how a group is performing, a trend over time is the greatest barometer. A look at the bottom slide clearly demonstrates that our clinic is trending up in every domain. Congratulations to all employees in the Child and Adolescent Center for their great work and focus on optimizing our patients' experience.

**MD Anderson Ambulatory CGCAHPS Top Box Score
& % Peer Rank
FY17 Q4 to FY18 Q1 Report**

	Top Box		% Peer Rank	
	FY 2017 Q4 (Oct1-Aug17)	FY 2018 Q1 (Sep1-Nov17)	FY 2017 Q4 (Oct1-Aug17)	FY 2018 Q1 (Sep1-Nov17)
Domain (P Question)	n = 4205	n = 4209	n = 1210	n = 1210
Access to Care 3 month (3)	78	78	26	23
Care Coordination (3)	80	80	95	95
Office Staff Quality (2)	94	94	48	48
Physician Clinical Quality (4)	94	94	65	73
Staff provider 4-10 (5)	87	90	78	88
Recommend this provider office (1)	94	94	82	94

**MD Anderson CGCAHPS - % Peer Rank by Domain
March 2016 – November 2017**



Harrison Named Director to Lead Most Patient Care Operations

Douglas Harrison, MD, associate professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, accepted the role of Director, Pediatric Patient Care Programs in February. Responsibilities include providing direction for all pediatric patient care programs, including inpatient, critical care, and outpatient services. **Cindy Herzog, MD**, professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, will continue in her role as deputy division head *ad interim*, focusing on administrative support of the division of Pediatrics, and center medical director for the Child and Adolescent Center. Harrison is currently a member of the Soft Tissue Sarcoma Steering Committee of the Children's Oncology Group (COG) and will serve as study chair for the next multi-institutional high risk rhabdomyosarcoma study. Here at CCH, he serves as the director of Inpatient Services, chair of the Pediatric Solid Tumor Committee, and co-chair of the Pediatric Sarcoma Committee. He leads or is co-investigator for several phase I and II clinical trials, which are in active accrual or in development for recurrent sarcomas and neuroblastoma. As the leader of the neuroblastoma program, Harrison worked with nursing officials to obtain approval to administer Ch14.18, an immunotherapy. He leads efforts to establish a metaiodobenzylguanidine (MIBG) therapeutic program in conjunction with the Department of Nuclear Medicine and Department of Facilities—Environment and Safety's Radiation Safety Office. If approved, CCH will be one of only a few hospitals in the U.S. to offer this trial.



Huh, Patient Family Honored by A Shelter for Cancer Families

A Shelter for Cancer Families honored **Winston Huh, MD**, associate professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, at the organization's Catwalk Gala, held Feb. 15. The organization is dedicated to providing support such as housing assistance for families coming to Houston from out of town, attending doctor appointments with parents or patients to take notes, helping to make sense of medical terms, or providing a shoulder to cry on.



L. Salvador, B. Rozo, W. Huh, and J. Rocha at Cat Walk

ASCF volunteers help celebrate milestones that occur during treatment such as birthdays, first days of school, or ringing the bell, signifying end of therapy. Huh, whose patient care efforts were featured in a video, received the "Commitment to Care Award." **Patient Damon Billeck** and his family accepted the "Celebration of Survivorship Award." The family acknowledged that the organization's help has made a huge difference in their four-year journey. "We don't know how we could have done this without ASCF," said **Brian Billeck**, Damon's dad.

Mejia to Receive International Honor for Teaching Outstanding Pediatric Critical Care

Rodrigo Mejia, MD, professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, will accept the the Society of Critical Care Medicine's 2018 Safar Global Partner Award at the SCCM's American College of Critical Care Medicine's Fellow Convocation in San Antonio on Feb. 26. The award recognizes leadership efforts in the creation, global expansion, and continued engagement of SCCM's international priorities. Dr. Mejia's work in this area includes serving as leader and editor for the first SCCM Pediatric Fundamentals of Critical Care Support textbook. He contributed to the second edition. He also was a contributing writer and editor of the book in Spanish, and taught a two-day course introducing key evaluation and mangement skills to physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers who may not be trained in the area but must provide critical care in the absence of an intensive care specialist. Mejia has directed multiple international courses all over the U.S., Mexico, Colombia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and China, among others.

Moody to Participate in Integrative Medicine Conference in March

Karen Moody, MD, MS, associate professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care and Director, Pediatric Palliative and Supportive Oncology, will give a presentation at the Eighth Annual Texas Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology Conference on March 3 at MD Anderson's Duncan Building. Her topic will be, "Enhancing AYA Care with Integrative Medicine." The conference is intended for physicians, researchers, nurses, social workers, child life specialists, psychologists, and others working with the 15-29 age group, as well as patients and their caregivers. More information about the conference is available [here](#).

Pediatrics Welcomes Several New Managers to the Division

Since the last newsletter was published in November, several new managers have joined Pediatrics. They are:

- Joan O'Hanlon Curry, RN, MS, APRN, PNP, Admin Dir, Pediatric Clin Svcs, **Jan. 8**
- Zach Gresham, MA, Arts in Medicine Program Manager, **Jan. 8**
- Tomika Gamble, BS, Camps Program Manager, **Jan. 16**
- Sherry Melton, BBA, CCRP, Clinical Studies Supervisor, **Feb. 16**

Division Employees Served as Panelists at 2018 Mentoring Day Sessions

Our employees shared knowledge about career, motivation, leadership, and serving their fellow employees in a united mission as panelists at various sessions at MD Anderson's 2018 Mentoring Day, held Jan. 31.



The conference was developed as a result of responses from The Big Survey over the past several years that showed mentoring is something that interests most employees. **Lisa Hafemeister, MHA**, division administrator, **Daniel Smith, MD**, manager of pediatric education and creative arts, and **Theda Williams**, program manager (above), were among speakers who addressed various topics including communication styles, job burnout, how to grow beyond your position, and leading through a storm.



Donation from Energy Transfer Partners Supports Research at Children's Cancer Hospital

MD Anderson President Peter WT Pisters, MD joined Children's Cancer Hospital leaders and representatives from Energy Transfer Partners to celebrate a \$1 million donation from the energy company and its Sunoco Foundation. Half the funds will support research to advance pediatric cancer treatments. The company has donated more than \$2.5 million to MD Anderson since 2014.

Amazon Delivers a Surprise to Patient

Our young patient, Grant, and his mom (left) Shelly are joined by **Donna Bell, RN, MS, FNP**, advance practice registered nurse, **Cesar Nunez, MD**, professor in Pediatrics, to celebrate a surprise \$10,000 donation from Amazon last fall. It was all part of National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September. Amazon—through its relationship with the American Childhood Cancer Organization—invited pediatric cancer patients to its fulfillment centers to explore their interests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects. Our patient enjoyed learning how robotics help Amazon employees at the Fort Worth location get merchandise from the warehouse to your home. At the end of their visit, Amazon leaders presented our patient with a check. Funds will be used for our in-hospital school program.



Out of This World Visit!

Our patients recently enjoyed a visit with someone who knows a thing or two about flying. Astronaut Jack Fischer visited [MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital](#) to show off space suits that some of our patients had a hand in decorating. The first suit was named Hope; the second suit is Unity; and the third suit is named Courage. The suits were produced as part of our Space Suit Art Project with NASA. Learn more:

<https://www.mdanderson.org/publications/conquest/Summer-2016/space-suit-art-project.html>.



Champions of AYA Program Spreading the Word across MD Anderson

The Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Program is building its bank of champions who share information with clinicians across the institution about what division leaders are establishing to assist 15- to 29-year-old patients. [John Livingston, MD](#), assistant professor in Sarcoma Medical Oncology and Pediatrics, as well co-director of our AYA Program, said 'build work' with the OneConnect/Epic Development team is ongoing, but implementation of the program is anticipated by the end of March.

Instructor Wins Support for Presentation in Canada

Jiemiao Hu, PhD, instructor in Pediatrics-Research, won an NCI-Keystone Symposia Scholarship to defray travel and lodging expenses while attending the Cancer Immunology Combinations meeting in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She will be presenting at a workshop, "Combination of Chemotherapy and Cytokine Facilitate Adoptive Transferred Effector T Cells Homing to the Core of Metastatic Tumors." Congratulations!

The [Gingerbread Village](#) was beautiful when it was constructed the week before Christmas by professional chefs with the Houston Racquet Club, The Briar Club, Petroleum Club of Houston, and Royal Oaks Country Club. The Houston Racquet Club donated \$30,000 to our Child Life Program. Following New Year celebrations, patients joined facilities employees in de-constructing the village. They had a great time!



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