INSTITUTE FOR CELL THERAPY DISCOVERY & INNOVATION

Signature Priority Committee fundraising guide

Immunotherapy leverages the body's immune system to attack cancer from within. The subfield of cell therapy primarily uses two types of immune cells — T cells and natural killer (NK) cells — to achieve this. While cancer cells have strategies to make themselves invisible or resistant to our immune system, cell therapy can overcome those strategies with its own countermeasures. Building on the work of renowned faculty, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center launched the Institute for Cell Therapy Discovery & Innovation to lead the world in the development of off-the-shelf cell therapies for patients with cancer and autoimmune diseases — delivering new insights in immunology and immune cell engineering.

Developing cell therapies for patients most in need

Launched: November 2024

Led by:
Katy Rezvani, M.D., Ph.D.

Fundraising target:
$150 million by August 2028

Funds raised:
$82 million+ committed
as of November 2025

Watch: Advancing cell therapy to benefit cancer patients

Accelerating the translation of science for cures

MD Anderson has the research infrastructure, disease expertise and diverse patient population required to advance this lifesaving work. Under the signature authority of **Katy Rezvani, M.D., Ph.D.**, and applied in collaboration with investigators leading corresponding clinical trials, funds raised will support the institute via four categories:

- **Research and development ($52.5 million):** The institute's primary focus is to develop and implement methodologies for generating immune cells engineered to target cancer and autoimmune diseases. A significant part of this work involves identifying the right antigens that can be targeted exclusively by cancer therapies. For many types of cancer, we still need to find these antigens. We also must identify and avoid certain antigens that could cause harmful side effects — thereby safeguarding the well-being of patients. Conducting intense preclinical work to test different antigens in various diseases is crucial to our success.
- **Viral vector facility ($45 million):** Viral vector facilities produce clinical-grade retroviruses, ensuring the safety and efficacy of cell therapy products. A dedicated facility will optimize and scale parameters related to source plasmids, producer cell lines and purification. Funds will support space acquisition, technology and maintenance.
- **Good Manufacturing Practice ($37.5 million):** After retrovirus production is complete, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) requires Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-compliant engineering and validation runs before the therapy is tested to ensure its safety. Funds will support GMP activity, including supplies and technology.
- **Personnel ($15 million):** Transforming an idea into an FDA-approved therapy requires a dedicated team of researchers, clinical partners and external collaborators. By raising funds to offset percentages of their salary, we guarantee their time is dedicated to the institute's important work.

As an essential member of the institute's team, you have the passion, creativity and insight to:

ACT as an ambassador within your network and community, educating others about the institute.

ADVISE executive leadership, sharing your expertise and your insights about potential supporters or volunteers.

INSPIRE and **INFORM** others by hosting an event to introduce the institute, at which experts share the latest updates.