

# what's new



ROBERT H. LURIE  
COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER  
OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

NEWS OF THE LURIE CANCER CENTER

January-February 2012

## Why Women Quit Taking Breast Cancer Drugs Early



Lynne Wagner

**WHY DO SO** many postmenopausal women who are treated for estrogen-sensitive breast cancer quit using drugs that help prevent the disease from recurring? The first study to actually ask the women themselves -- as well as the largest, most scientifically rigorous study to examine the question -- reports 36 percent of women quit early because of the medications' side effects, which are more severe and widespread than previously known. The research also reveals a big gap between what women tell their doctors about side effects and what they actually experience.

"Clinicians consistently underestimate the side effects associated with treatment," said lead investigator Lynne Wagner, PhD, Associate Professor in Medical Social Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and a clinical psychologist at the Lurie Cancer

Center. "They give patients a drug they hope will help them, so they have a motivation to underrate the negative effects. Patients don't want to be complainers and don't want their doctor to discontinue treatment. So no one knew how bad it really was for patients."

The symptom most likely to cause women to stop using the drugs was joint pain. Other side effects women reported as compromising their quality of life were hot flashes, decreased libido, weight gain, feeling bloated, breast sensitivity, mood swings, irritability and nausea.

"This is a wake-up call to physicians that says if your patient is feeling really beaten up by treatment, the risk of her quitting early is high," Wagner said. "We need to be better at managing the symptoms of our patients to improve their quality of life."

Wagner's research was presented at the 34th Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

» [Read more](#)

## Share the Holiday Spirit

Children arriving at Northwestern's Radiation Oncology Center on January 4th were delighted to receive toys from the nurses along with their treatment. The Lurie Cancer Center's Holiday Toy Drive provided the gifts, including 50 handsome "Holiday Bears" donated by Aeropostale thanks to Clinical Research Associate Adam Brakman (pictured).

The Lurie Cancer Center will continue to collect new unwrapped toys until **January 13**. Boxes are available in the following locations:

- Galter Pavilion, 21st floor, near staff elevator
- Prentice Women's Hospital, 15th floor, staff lounge
- Prentice Women's Hospital, 4th floor
- 676 N. St. Clair, 12th floor, suite 1200
- Lurie Medical Research Center, 3rd floor

## inside this issue

### LURIE CANCER CENTER NEWS AND NOTES

» [New Treatment Offers an Alternative to Amputation for Patients with Melanoma](#)

» [Northwestern Integrative Medicine Offers Free Services to Cancer Patients](#)

» [More news. . .](#)

### » AWARDS AND HONORS

### » PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

### » FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### » PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### » NEW STAFF



# Lurie Cancer Center News & Notes

## New Treatment Offers an Alternative to Amputation for Patients with Melanoma

PATIENTS DIAGNOSED with metastatic melanoma on a limb have traditionally had limited options for fighting the often deadly form of skin cancer. Surgery is often impossible or would require the removal of large portions of tissue – even the entire arm or leg. Northwestern Medicine oncologists are now offering an alternative approach that focuses on saving the limb while eliminating or shrinking the cancer, and may avoid the need for radical surgery altogether. The procedure, called isolated limb infusion, is performed at only a handful of medical centers across the country due to the complexity of the approach and expertise of the team required.



During the procedure, doctors use a tourniquet to temporarily stop blood flow to the limb. A high-dose of heated chemotherapy medication is then injected into a main artery of the affected limb using a catheter to target the cancer. By isolating the limb, doctors are able to prevent the otherwise toxic high-dose chemotherapy drugs from affecting other organs.

“This is a remarkable and frequently effective option for treating patients who otherwise would face amputation or disfiguring surgery,” said Karl Bilimoria, MD, surgical oncologist at Northwestern Memorial and member of the Lurie Cancer Center.

According to Bilimoria, approximately two-thirds of patients will significantly benefit from the treatment, with noticeable shrinkage of the tumor in as little as one month. “Isolated limb infusion is capable of providing long-term tumor control and better long-term survival,” said Bilimoria, who is also an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. “We are pleased to be able to offer an alternative that can increase their chance of survival, preserve their limb, and improve their quality of life.”

» [Read more](#)

## NU NEIGHBORS Established to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities



*Melissa Simon*

A \$1.2 MILLION grant from the National Cancer Institute's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities will support NU NEIGHBORS, a partnership between the Lurie Cancer Center and Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) to help reduce inequalities related to cancer care.

This collaboration between a minority serving institution (NEIU) and a NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center (Lurie Cancer Center)

is one of 12 in the nation, and the first in Illinois funded by the Comprehensive Partnerships to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CPRCHD) program. The program will foster community-engaged cancer disparities research, build a platform for improved public health-related curriculum, and further the development of well-trained and experienced cancer researchers and students who choose health and science-related careers.

“We have a lot to learn from one another,” says Co-Principal Investigator Melissa Simon, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor in the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Preventive Medicine, and Medical Social Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. “What makes this partnership unique is we’re intent on addressing cancer health disparities through deliberate engagement. We’re not simply focused on increasing research participation or gaining input to an established investigation, but on training MSI junior faculty and minority students how to be the initiators of credible scientific research. By weaving our collective strengths as universities into the social fabric of more Chicago-area communities, it is our hope that the CPRCHD program will serve as a catalyst in transforming cancer health outcomes at the community level,” adds Simon who is also Director of Patient Navigation at the Lurie Cancer Center and an obstetrician-gynecologist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

» [Read more](#)

# Awards & Honors

**Sui Huang, PhD** and **Richard Green, MD**; **Teri Odom, PhD**; **Malathy Shanmugam, PhD**; and **Alexander Stegh, PhD** and **Chad Mirkin, PhD**, have received awards for translational projects that could benefit from services provided by the Tumor Biology Core. The Rosenberg Family Cancer Research Fund provides support to Lurie Cancer Center members engaged in translational cancer research.

**Chad A. Mirkin, PhD**, a world-renowned leader in nanotechnology research and its application, is joined world leaders, including President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit 2011 in Honolulu. Mirkin, a member of President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, took part in a panel discussion of the changing technologies in energy and nanotechnology that are likely to transform business and markets in the Asia-Pacific region.

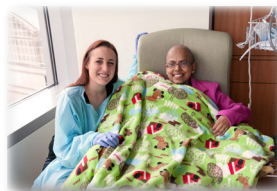
**Teresa Woodruff, PhD**, was one of nine individuals awarded the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring on Dec. 12 at the White House. The award honors Woodruff's work with the Women's Health Science Program for High School Girls and Beyond, a Northwestern Medicine program. Designed to mentor urban minority high school girls, the program prepares these students for college and careers in science and health.



*President Barack Obama greets recipients of the Presidential Award for Excellence. Teresa Woodruff stands at the end of the line, in red.*

"Meeting President Obama in the Oval Office was a true honor and humbling event," said Woodruff, Director and Founder of the Northwestern Oncofertility Consortium. "This award is for the hundreds of faculty, staff, and students throughout Northwestern University and Northwestern Memorial Hospital who donate their time to mentorship," Woodruff added. "Our program focuses on the next generation of female leaders. Our goal is to ensure that the future is filled with a diverse group of problem solvers ready to meet the world's challenges."

## Covers of Comfort



Hodgkin's Lymphoma survivor Katie Widmar returns to the Lurie Cancer Center each December to visit with cancer patients undergoing treatment during the holidays at Prentice Women's Hospital. Katie and her mom Cindy deliver personalized blankets that she and others have created through Covers of Comfort, the non-profit organization they started. "Wrapping others in 'comfort'

and spreading hope," has become a meaningful part of her journey, Katie said.

» [Read more](#)

# Funding Opportunities

---

## Summer Research Programs at the Lurie Cancer Center

TRAINING THE NEXT generation of clinicians and scientists is at the center of the Lurie Cancer Center's mission. Our summer research programs give students the opportunity to learn and become active participants in cancer research.

The **CURE (Continuing Umbrella of Research Experience)** Program offers summer research experiences for underserved college students from across the country interested in pursuing careers in the biomedical sciences, including those beginning their undergraduate education. It is funded by the Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD) of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Each year the Lurie Cancer Center accepts 12 college students to work alongside top cancer researchers in state-of-the-art laboratories.

The scientists act as mentors and work with students on nationally funded laboratory research projects during the eight-week summer program. Students are also introduced to the basics of cancer research through focused seminars presented by faculty on various research topics. At the end of the CURE program, each trainee is required to prepare a brief written summary and an oral report of his or her project to fellow CURE students and faculty mentors.

» [Details and Application Process](#)

**PS-OC (Physical Sciences-Oncology Center) Summer Research Experiences** are available for underserved college students from outside institutions, as well as Northwestern University undergraduate and medical students.

Each of the summer programs is designed to encourage future scientists to consider careers at the interface of the physical sciences and cancer research.

» [Details and Application Process](#)

## Basic Sciences Research Division

**H Foundation Incentive Awards** provide funding for faculty who have submitted and received a score on a RO1 grant to the NCI for the first time in their career. If additional funds are available, awards will be made to other faculty for new, first-time NCI RO1 submissions, which are scored but not yet funded.

**H Foundation Bridge Awards** provide up to \$20,000 of support for competing renewals of NCI-sponsored RO1 research that missed the payline.

» [Details and Application Process](#)

**Applications for H Foundation Incentive and Bridge Awards will be reviewed on a rolling basis** and accepted until funds for the year are expended.

### Lea Charitable Trust Equipment Grants

Through the generous support of the *Lea Charitable Trust*, a pool of funds is available to full members of the Lurie Cancer Center affiliated with one of the Basic Sciences Research Programs for use by multiple investigators or to support small equipment grants for collaborative research projects.

**Lea Charitable Trust Equipment Grants are made on a rolling basis** as funds become available.

Applications for Basic Sciences Research Division Funding Opportunities should be submitted to Tom O'Halloran, PhD via [Jenna Ter Molen](#).

---

## Prostate Cancer Spore

The Northwestern University-University of Chicago-NorthShore University Health Systems SPORE (Specialized Program on Research Excellence) in Prostate Cancer seeks applications for possible inclusion in the competing renewal submission due January 2013. The Prostate SPORE has received funding from the NCI since 2001 to conduct interdisciplinary and translational research in prostate cancer.

This RFA is for translational research projects that can be advanced to the point of obtaining an IND to conduct an early phase clinical trial or development of a biomarker utilizing human specimens within the 5-year grant. The clinical trial should plan to begin within the five year project period. The application deadline is **February 15, 2012**.

» [Details and Application Process](#)

## Travel Fellowship Awards

The Katten Muchin Rosenman Travel Scholarship Program (KMR) and the Center for Genetic Medicine Travel Fellowship (CGM) Review Committee would like to congratulate the following Travel Fellowship Awards recipients:

Jonathan Freaney (KMR)  
Oxana Nekrasova, PhD (CGM)  
Relja Popovic, PhD (KMR)  
Joshua Waitzman (KMR)  
Xiao Zhang, PhD (KMR)

The next application deadline is **Friday, March 2, 2012**.

» [Details and Application Process](#)

# Professional Programs

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, the Lurie Cancer Center offers professional education on various cancer related topics. Below is a list of programs scheduled through April, 2012. For more information or to register, visit [cancer.northwestern.edu](http://cancer.northwestern.edu) or call 312.695.1304.

For more information or to register, visit [cancer.northwestern.edu](http://cancer.northwestern.edu) or call 312.695.1304.

---

## Northwestern Brain Tumor Institute CME Symposium 2012

January 28, 2012

Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital  
660 N. Westmoreland Rd., Lake Forest  
Chair: Jeffrey J. Raizer, MD

---

## Drug Delivery and Nanomaterials Symposium

January 30, 2012

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center  
Chairs: Gayle E. Woloschak, PhD and Vadim Backman, PhD

---

## Breast Cancer Review: Updates from the 2011 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

February 16, 2012

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center  
Chair: William Gradishar, MD

---

## 8th Annual Thoracic Surgical Oncology Nursing Conference

March 22, 2012

Prentice Women's Hospital  
Chair: Alberto de Hoyos, MD

---

## Malkin-Kraft Lectureship

April 4, 2012

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center  
April 5, 2012

Evanston Campus (location to be determined)  
Speaker: Scott Lowe, PhD

---

## 7th Annual Pain and Palliative Care Conference

April 12, 2012

Northwestern Memorial Hospital  
Chair: Judith Paice, PhD, RN

---

## 2012 Spring Translational Cancer Research Workshop

April 18, 2012

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center  
Chair: Jill Pelling, PhD

## 9th International Chicago Lymphoma Symposium

*(Hosted by the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Massachusetts)*

April 27-28, 2012

Sofitel Chicago Water Tower

Chairs: Leo Gordon, MD, Andrew Evens, MD and Sonali Smith, MD

## GRAND ROUNDS

Fridays: 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center  
303 E. Superior, Chicago  
Gray Conference Room (unless otherwise noted)

Presented by the Division of Hematology/Oncology and the Lurie Cancer Center, the weekly Grand Rounds update physicians and healthcare personnel on developing trends and techniques in medicine.

» [View the Grand Rounds Schedule here](#)

## TUMOR CELL BIOLOGY

Thursdays: 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center  
303 E. Superior, Chicago  
Baldwin Auditorium (unless otherwise noted)

The Tumor Cell Biology Seminars present weekly updates on novel translational cancer research in the areas of tumor biology, biomedical informatics and cancer prevention and diagnosis.

» [View the Tumor Cell Biology Seminar Schedule here](#)

» [Sign up for Weekly Email Reminders:](#)

If you would like to receive weekly email reminders for Grand Rounds and/or the Tumor Cell Biology Seminars, please notify Denise Marshall, [d-marshall4@northwestern.edu](mailto:d-marshall4@northwestern.edu).

# Patient & Public Programs

THE LURIE CANCER CENTER is committed to educating the public about cancer prevention and treatment, and offers a wide range of community events and patient programs throughout the year. For more information or to register, visit [cancer.northwestern.edu](http://cancer.northwestern.edu) or call 312.695.1304.

## Healthy Lifestyles Weight Management Group

Tuesdays, January 17-- March 6, 2012

6:00 p.m.--7:30 p.m.

Prentice Women's Hospital

3rd Floor, Conference Room S

Available free of charge to Northwestern's cancer patients who are in active treatment, as well as those who have completed their treatment. Led by Lurie Cancer Center Registered Dietitians, the group will meet for eight weeks, discussing various weight management topics and tips.

## Leukemia Research Foundation Free Annual Town Hall Meeting

January 29, 2012

Feinberg Pavilion

3rd Floor, Conference Room A

## Gilda's Club Chicago at the Lurie Cancer Center

PATIENTS AND FAMILIES at the Lurie Cancer Center have on-site access to a wide range of programs and activities offered by Gilda's Club Chicago. Designed to be fun, informative and reduce stress, all the activities are offered free of charge. No reservations are necessary —patients and families can drop by any time.

Yoga, Art as Relaxation, Breathing and Meditation, and a Caregiver Workshop are just a few of the options offered in Galter Pavilion and Prentice Women's Hospital. Some activities do not meet every week.

» [View schedule](#)

---

## Look Good...Feel Better

A FREE WORKSHOP that teaches beauty techniques to women who are actively undergoing cancer treatment, to help them combat the appearance-related side effects of radiation and chemotherapy.

» [View schedule](#)

## Northwestern Integrative Medicine Offers Free Services to Cancer Patients



Melinda Ring

NORTHWESTERN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE (NIM), led by Melinda Ring, MD, combines conventional and complementary therapies to aid in the healing process. Patients receiving cancer care at Northwestern are eligible for a total of two appointments free of charge (with a referral from their oncology provider).

» [Read more about services offered by NIM.](#)

# New Members

---

## Cancer Center Appoints New Members

---

**Steven T. Rosen, MD.** Director of the Lurie Cancer Center, announces the following full member appointments:

---

**Karl Bilimoria, MD,** is Assistant Professor of Surgery at the Feinberg School of Medicine. His clinical practice focuses on patients with melanoma and skin cancers, sarcoma and soft tissue cancers, and breast cancer. His research has focused on examining and improving the delivery and quality of care for surgical and oncology patients. Dr. Bilimoria also works extensively with the American College of Surgeons on surgical quality improvement initiatives.

**Contact Dr. Bilimoria at 312.695.4853 or [kbilimoria@nmff.org](mailto:kbilimoria@nmff.org)**

**Rosemary Braun, PhD, MPH,** is Assistant Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine. She is a computational biologist with an interest in the development of methods for integrative, systems-level analysis of high-dimensional genomic and proteomic data. These methods incorporate bioinformatics information with experimental data to characterize the networks of interactions that lead to the emergence of complex phenotypes. Dr. Braun looks forward to collaborating with Lurie Cancer Center researchers who use high-throughput studies to investigate cancer susceptibility and treatment response.

**Contact Dr. Braun at 312.503.3644 or [rbraun@northwestern.edu](mailto:rbraun@northwestern.edu)**

**Rishi Lulla, MD,** is Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Lulla is a pediatric neuro-oncologist with a translational research interest in microRNAs as cancer biomarkers in patients with central nervous system tumors. His clinical research focus includes new agents in CNS tumor advanced through Phase I clinical trials. Dr. Lulla is also interested in complementary medicine and is investigating the utility of acupuncture to improve cancer-related fatigue.

**Contact Dr. Lulla at 773.880.3537 or [rlulla@childrensmemorial.org](mailto:rlulla@childrensmemorial.org)**

**Terrance Peabody, MD,** is Edwin Warner Ryerson Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics at the Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Peabody's research and clinical expertise focus on limb salvage surgery and functional restoration for adult and pediatric patients with bone and soft tissue tumors, metastatic diseases, and severe trauma or infection.

**Contact Dr. Peabody at 312.695.0404 or [tpeabody@nmff.org](mailto:tpeabody@nmff.org)**

**Adam Petrich, MD,** is Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine. A hematologist / oncologist, his research focus is on Mantle cell lymphoma, diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, and HIV/ AIDS-related lymphoma. Dr. Petrich's clinical interests focus on novel treatments for patients with relapsed and refractory lymphoma of all types and on special populations of lymphoma patients, such as those who have immunosuppression after organ transplants, and those with HIV/AIDS.

**Contact Dr. Petrich at 312.695.6180 or [apetrich@nmff.org](mailto:apetrich@nmff.org)**

**Juned Siddique, DrPH,** is Assistant Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine. A biostatistician interested in the measurement and analysis of diet and physical activity, he is currently the PI of a NCI K07-award, "Real-time analysis of diet and activity data." Dr. Siddique also works closely with investigators in the Behavioral Medicine Division of Preventive Medicine helping to design and analyze lifestyle interventions. He is currently refining a risk prediction model for breast cancer when there are missing data in the predictors.

**Contact Dr. Siddique at 312.908.9241 or [siddique@northwestern.edu](mailto:siddique@northwestern.edu)**

# Welcome New Staff

---

**Leanne Fountas**

Data Assistant 2  
Clinical Research Office  
[leanne.fountas@northwestern.edu](mailto:leanne.fountas@northwestern.edu)

**Daniel Larsen**

Clinical Research Coordinator  
Clinical Research Office  
[daniel.larsen@northwestern.edu](mailto:daniel.larsen@northwestern.edu)

**Michelle Pattison**

Research Administrator  
Operations  
[m-pattison@northwestern.edu](mailto:m-pattison@northwestern.edu)

**Hala Simm**

Clinical Research Coordinator  
Clinical Research Office  
[h-simm@northwestern.edu](mailto:h-simm@northwestern.edu)

**Angela Tomasiak**

Administrative Assistant 3  
Pathology Core Facility  
[angelatomaski@northwestern.edu](mailto:angelatomaski@northwestern.edu)



**Emily Berry, MD** has joined the Feinberg School of Medicine's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology as Assistant Professor, and is a gynecologic oncologist at the Maggie Daley Center for Women's Cancer Care. Dr. Berry received her medical degree from the Oregon Health and Science University. She then completed a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison followed by a Gynecologic Oncology fellowship at Northwestern University

Dr. Berry returns to Northwestern from Oregon Health Science University where she was an Assistant Professor. Her areas of clinical interest include minimally invasive surgery, intraperitoneal

chemotherapy for ovarian cancer, and gestational trophoblastic disease. Contact Dr. Berry at 312.472.4684 or [eberry@nmff.org](mailto:eberry@nmff.org).

**Mariam Eldeib, MSW, LCSW** has joined the Lurie Cancer Center's Supportive Oncology Team as an American Cancer Society Patient Navigator focusing on women's cancers. Contact Mariam at 312.695.0502.

---

## what's new

**News of the Robert H. Lurie  
Comprehensive Cancer Center of  
Northwestern University**

Office of Public Affairs and  
Communications -  
676 N. St. Clair  
Suite 1200  
Chicago, IL 60611  
312.695.1304

*Director*

**Steven T. Rosen, MD, FACP**

*Director,*

*Public Affairs and Communications*

**Sharon Markman**

*Editorial Advisor*

**Tim Volpe**

*Managing Editor*

**Jennifer Bowker**

*Designer*

**Daniel D. Cooper**

---

## Help Wanted: Reporters

PLEASE SEND SUGGESTIONS for this newsletter to Jennifer Bowker, [j-bowker@northwestern.edu](mailto:j-bowker@northwestern.edu)

---

## Lurie Cancer Center Weekly Updates

INFORMATION TO BE CONSIDERED for inclusion in the Lurie Cancer Center's weekly e-mail updates must be received at least one week in advance. Submit suggestions to Denise Marshall at [d-marshall4@northwestern.edu](mailto:d-marshall4@northwestern.edu).