

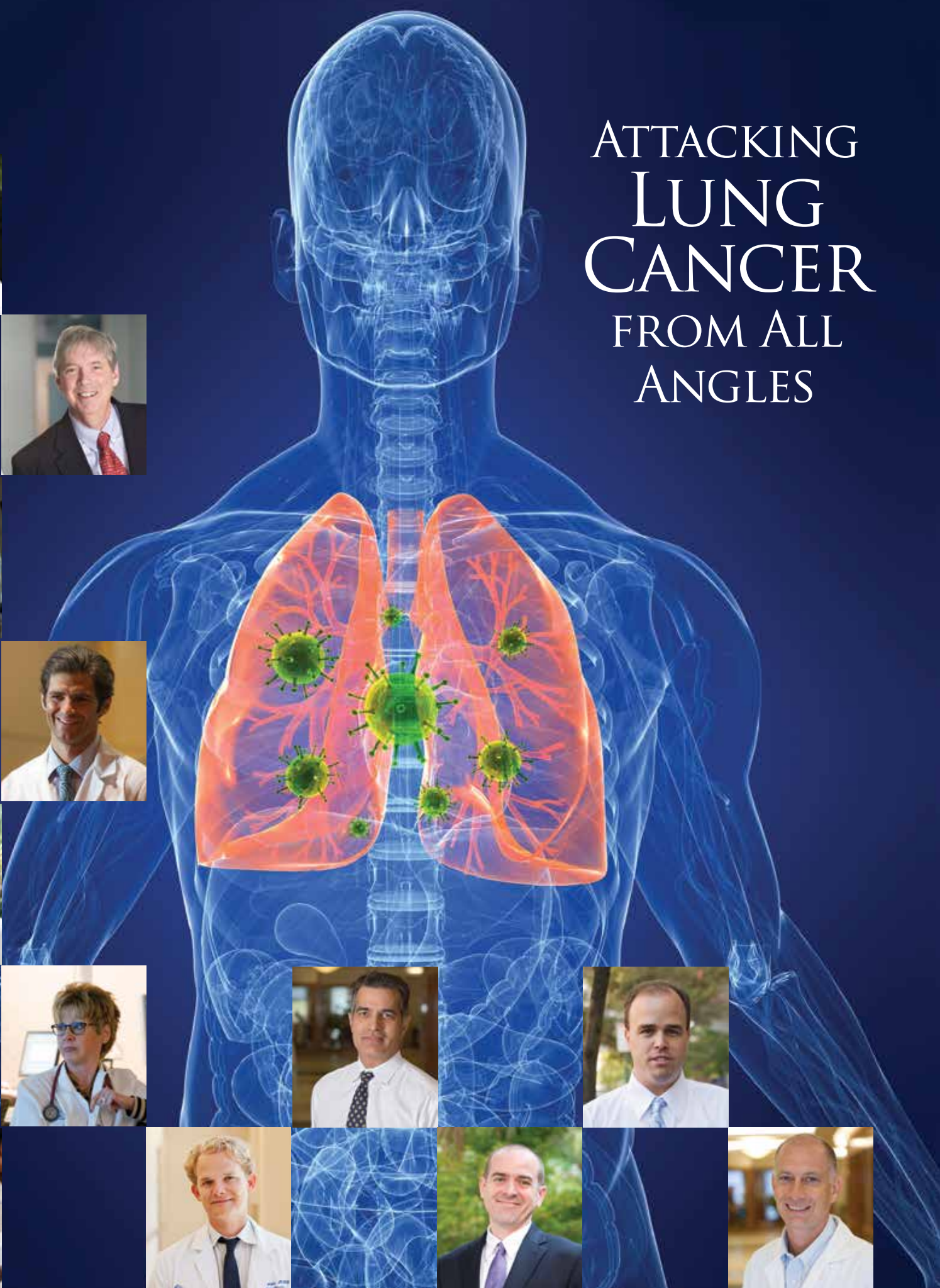
HOLLINGS

The Newsletter of Hollings Cancer Center
Medical University of South Carolina

HORIZONS

Fall 2015

ATTACKING
LUNG
CANCER
FROM ALL
ANGLES





■ An Interview with Anthony J. Alberg, PhD, MPH

A career epidemiologist and noted expert on cancer etiology, Dr. Anthony Alberg has been Associate Director for Population Sciences for the Hollings Cancer Center since 2006 and currently serves as the Interim Director. A Professor of Public Health Sciences and the Blatt Ness Distinguished Endowed Chair in Oncology, he is regarded by colleagues and staff as a gifted leader and mentor and recognized for his depth as a researcher and for his infectious laugh.

What are three words that describe Hollings Cancer Center?

“Commitment to excellence.” This theme permeates the organization at every level, including patient care, research, teaching, and outreach.

What has surprised you in your role as Interim Director for the Hollings Cancer Center?

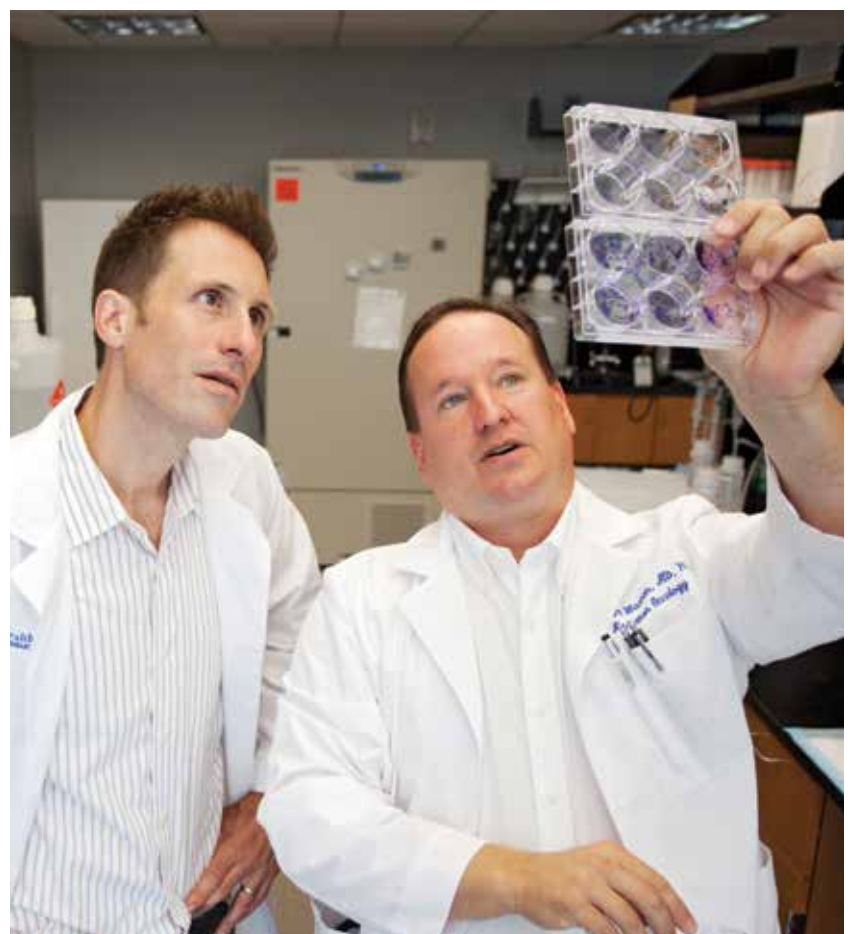
There have been so many pleasant surprises—they are too numerous to mention. Perhaps what stands out the most is the incredibly high esteem with which the Hollings Cancer Center is held by people from all walks of life. This is true not only throughout all reaches of MUSC and our surrounding community, but throughout the state. The extent of the support we receive from the community we serve is deeply touching. It is an honor and a privilege to be associated with an organization that strives for such high ideals and is held in such high regard.

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HOLLINGS CANCER CENTER: ADDRESSING CANCER FROM ALL ANGLES

The Hollings Cancer Center (HCC) has a firm commitment to identifying and addressing all of the issues surrounding cancer. This includes cancer prevention and control, basic and applied research, advanced clinical trials, and the latest in clinical therapies and treatments. While there are many medical professionals treating cancer in our state and across the country, the number of institutions that offer true depth and breadth in addressing the myriad of issues related to a specific cancer quickly dwindles. We believe that we can only offer our patients the best possible outcome through a multi-pronged, multi-disciplinary approach to better understanding and treating cancers.

In this issue of Hollings Horizons, we examine the many angles from which Hollings Cancer Center is working to address a single cancer – lung cancer, but we apply this same multi-faceted approach to every cancer.





Tobacco Control and Lung Cancer Screening

One of the keys to curing cancer lies in better understanding how it occurs and, ultimately, how to prevent it. Much has been learned in the last 50 years about the causes of lung cancers. We know that 80 percent of lung cancers in women and 90 percent in men are caused by tobacco use. In non-tobacco-related lung cancers, we have made major breakthroughs in understanding the origins of those cancers in the last 15 years as well, with the identification of genetic markers associated with many of these lung cancers leading to significant advances in the development of new therapies and approaches. But there is still much to learn.

Knowing that the vast majority of lung cancers are caused by tobacco use or exposure and that smoking can now be linked to eleven different cancers, we have a responsibility to address tobacco use and reduce tobacco addiction. At the Hollings Cancer Center, researchers are working to understand tobacco use and identify ways to curb its use. Dr. Matthew J. Carpenter and Dr. K. Michael Cummings co-lead the HCC Tobacco Research Group, which also coordinates the South Carolina Tobacco Research Interest Group (SCTRIG), composed of HCC researchers and public health professionals and researchers throughout the state, including national experts on smoking cessation techniques, trends, and policy research. The group is researching a variety of cessation techniques, including looking at the potential harms and benefits of e-cigarettes in cessation. Dr. Anthony J. Alberg, also a participant in SCTRIG, recently participated in a year-long Institute of Medicine study on the potential impact of raising the legal age for purchasing tobacco products. Dr. Benjamin A. Toll, a clinical psychologist who joined our team this year from the Yale University faculty, is researching novel smoking cessation techniques. He serves on the American Association of Cancer Researchers Tobacco and Smoking subcommittee along with fellow HCC researcher Graham W. Warren, MD. HCC tobacco control researchers have produced a steady stream of high impact work. They serve in many capacities in national leadership and are frequently sought as experts in the field.

Because of the knowledge base emerging on the importance of smoking cessation to patients in general and cancer patients in particular, Hollings Cancer Center established a Smoking Cessation Program. Patients at HCC and all patients admitted to the hospital at MUSC are screened for tobacco use and referred to the program for evidence-based intervention, which was developed based on research at Hollings and across the country.

Hollings Cancer Center also participated in the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST) over a period of five years, enrolling approximately 600 South Carolinians in a study that screened more than

Interview, continued

You are often asked why someone should come to Hollings Cancer Center over other regional cancer programs. How do you respond?

We are the only cancer center in South Carolina that is designated by the National Cancer Institute—it would be difficult to overestimate the rigorous standards that have to be met to achieve this status. To me this says it all, we stand alone in South Carolina. As an academic medical center, patients can expect to receive leading-edge evidence-based cancer care from physicians who are experts in their field. The cancer care we deliver is multi-disciplinary, bringing together teams of cancer specialists to review every patient so no stone is left unturned in developing the optimal treatment plan for each patient. Finally, we are working hard to help shape the future through our research efforts to develop and test for new and better ways to treat cancer. We offer access not only to national clinical trials but to clinical trials that are developed on this campus by our faculty. This newsletter highlights the work Hollings Cancer Center is doing to advance new discoveries and treatments for lung cancer.

What does the future hold for lung cancer patients?

Seeing the work that occurs every day at Hollings Cancer Center, including our collaboration with experts across the country, I have great optimism for the future. With lung cancer, as with other cancers, we are working to tackle the disease from every angle – and we are making significant strides. First, the major cause of lung cancer is exposure to tobacco smoke; we have experts who are studying policies and developing new treatment strategies to reduce smoking. Second, low-dose spiral CT screening has been shown to be effective in detecting lung cancer early and thus reducing the risk of dying in high risk populations. We have experts on the forefront of developing evidence-based recommendations for how to best implement lung cancer screening protocols nationally. Lung cancer is also a disease for which a disproportionate burden is shouldered by African Americans, specifically males. We have researchers who are attempting to understand why this disparity exists so that we can develop strategies to eliminate the disparity. With respect to diagnosing lung cancer, a Hollings researcher was the lead author on a recent *New England Journal of Medicine* article that found promising results for a blood test that could help improve the diagnosis of lung cancer by overcoming some of the weaknesses of the traditional bronchoscopy—another example of how the Hollings Cancer Center is helping to change what is possible in cancer care. In treatment for lung cancer patients, the notion that immunotherapies would provide a new breakthrough would have been a foreign concept not that long ago, but this has now come to fruition, and our researchers are working to push the envelope further on this front. Finally, the promise of integrating breakthroughs in genomics into clinical practice via precision medicine is already a reality for some forms of lung cancer, and as knowledge advances, there will be further breakthroughs. Because of these efforts and much more work being done at Hollings and across the U.S., we can expect to see the lung cancer mortality rate in South Carolina continue to decline.



50,000 patients across the United States for early lung cancer. The evidence gained from this study led to new recommendations for lung screening, including regular CT scans, in former smokers ages 55-74. Dr. Gerard A. Silvestri was a lead investigator for the NLST at MUSC and reported the findings of the national trial last year to the CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), the federal body that sets guidelines for payment through the Medicare and Medicaid system. After CMS accepted these new screening guidelines, indicating lung screening should be covered in this at-risk population, major medical insurers in the country began to follow suit.

As a result of the research done through the NLST and advocacy by Hollings researchers, those most at-risk for developing lung cancer are now recommended for a lung screening program that can catch lung cancer at much earlier stages, when the chance of successful treatment is greatly improved. With this new screening protocol now approved, Hollings Cancer Center is establishing a lung screening program under the direction of Dr. Nichole T. Tanner, a pulmonologist trained in advanced diagnostics and interventional pulmonary procedures, and clinical psychologist Benjamin Toll, PhD. The CMS guidelines require that screening programs include nine components, including a smoking cessation program, to qualify for reimbursement, ensuring that screening is done in a comprehensive and impactful manner.

Through the lung screening clinic and other ongoing research, HCC continues to study who is best served through advanced screening and what those screening tech-

niques should be, advocating for a personalized approach and shared decision-making in screening. Dr. Silvestri recently co-lead a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* evaluating the effectiveness of one new technique in which testing for gene expression is combined with bronchoscopy.

In addition to better prevention and early intervention, there are also significant racial disparities in lung cancer that must be addressed. Lung cancer incidence rates are similar among African-American (AA) and European American (EA) women, but rates are approximately 47 percent higher among AA men than among EA men, with AA males having a 25 percent greater mortality from lung cancer than EA males. Beyond mortality rates, the five-year survival rate is 20 percent poorer among AAs compared with EAs. The Hollings Cancer Center Cancer Control team is researching these disparities and searching for ways to reverse the trends where possible.

Advanced Treatment

Through ongoing training, research, and a commitment to offering patients the very latest and best in treatment, Hollings continues to expand our range of treatment options and approaches. The multi-disciplinary thoracic cancer clinic meets weekly, bringing together pulmonologists, thoracic surgeons, medical oncologists, radiologists, radiation oncologists, and other specialists focused on lung cancer to see patients and collaboratively create an optimal treatment plan. This comprehensive approach streamlines care and eliminates the need for patients to attend multiple appointments.

Medical oncologists specializing in lung

cancer are critical in evaluating appropriate therapies for each patient, including options available through clinical trials at HCC and across the country. HCC has 30 active clinical trials specific to lung cancer, 16 of which are currently enrolling patients. There are an additional six new trials in the process of being opened. Dr. Carol Sherman, a thoracic oncologist, has served on the thoracic oncology team at Hollings Cancer Center for more than 15 years and is involved in many of these trials. With long-standing expertise in treating lung cancer, she serves as a resource to other medical oncologists throughout the state. Dr. John Wrangle, a recent recruit from the Johns Hopkins University faculty, and Dr. Mark Rubinstein, a Hollings researcher and assistant professor with the Department of Surgery, have recently developed a trial of a novel combination of immunotherapies for lung cancer patients that will be available only at Hollings Cancer Center and three other major cancer centers around the U.S. This new trial will be available for patients who have progressed after first line chemotherapy and will attempt to improve upon recent clinical advances employing immunotherapy in lung cancer.

Drs. Chadrick E. Denlinger and Jacob A. Klapper lead the HCC thoracic oncology surgery team, focusing their practice solely on thoracic surgery, placing them among a very small number of surgeons in the region. Although research shows that high volume centers with dedicated thoracic surgeons have better outcomes, 23 percent of lung cancer surgery in the U.S. is still performed by general surgeons. This specialized HCC thoracic surgery team is experienced in video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS),

a minimally invasive surgical technique offering significant advances over traditional open chest surgery. Approximately 70 percent of all thoracic surgeries performed at MUSC are now minimally invasive, with 95 percent of Stage I lung cancer patients eligible for the less invasive option. This is a marked difference from 64 percent of Stage I patients who receive minimally invasive surgical procedures across the 194 major surgical centers reporting to the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. Dr. Denlinger notes that there are varying degrees of “less invasive VATS surgery”; the technique used at Hollings ensures the least trauma to the chest cavity, a measure research has shown to improve outcomes.

Dr. Anand K. Sharma, the lead radiation oncologist specializing in lung cancer, consults with the multi-disciplinary thoracic team each week in clinic and at the Thoracic Tumor Board. One advanced technique Dr. Sharma offers patients with certain types of lung cancer is Stereotatic Body Radiotherapy (SBRT), a high dose, precise radiotherapy delivered in five or fewer treatments, minimizing side effects often seen with regular radiation treatments. Not available in most communities in South Carolina, SBRT can be used to treat patients when surgery is not an option, including patients with recurring tumors who have had previous radiation. SBRT’s precision protects other healthy tissue and organs surrounding the tumor from radiation.

An All-Encompassing Approach

By combining depth of research with highly specialized, multi-disciplinary approaches to treatment, Hollings Cancer Center furthers our mission to attack all cancers from every angle. We’re working daily to change what’s possible for all cancer patients and have a commitment to do all that is possible in this effort.



INSIDE A HOLLINGS TUMOR BOARD

Eleven tumor boards meet weekly at Hollings Cancer Center, with each focusing on a specific disease site. While all accredited regional or local cancer centers are required to have a tumor board, Hollings tumor boards are disease-site specific and staffed by cancer experts specializing in a particular type of cancer. When the Hollings Thoracic Tumor Board meets each Wednesday, 20 to 30 experts who focus their research and clinical practice on thoracic cancers come together to review patient cases and treatment plans. Working collaboratively, the team of pulmonologists, medical oncologists, thoracic oncology surgeons, radiation oncologists, radiologists and pathologists, clinical trials managers, and a team of clinical and research specialists who are dedicated to thoracic cancers are able to evaluate in a very specific and advanced way the best course of treatment for each patient. When appropriate, this includes exploring treatment options available through our network of clinical trials across the U.S.



CAROLYN D. BRITTEN, MD, NAMED CHIEF OF HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY

Carolyn D. Britten, MD, a noted expert in Phase I* cancer clinical trials and Associate Director for Clinical Investigations at the Hollings Cancer Center, has been named Director of the Hematology/Oncology Division in MUSC's Department of Medicine. Dr. Britten was recruited to MUSC in 2012 from the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she held several leadership positions from 2001 to 2012, including Associate Director of the Signal Transduction and Therapeutics Research Program. At MUSC, she holds the Charles Westfield Coker Endowed Chair in GI Oncology, which is part of the South Carolina SmartState Centers of Excellence. Since arriving at MUSC, she has spearheaded the

development of a Phase I clinical trials program that now includes a portfolio of more than 20 actively accruing trials for patients with advanced cancer.

HCC Interim Director Anthony Alberg commented, "After joining MUSC in 2012, Dr. Britten quickly became a sought-after collaborator among Hollings scientists. With a keen insight into the latest scientific underpinnings of cancer, she has helped our scientists translate their laboratory findings directly into the clinic via clinical trials. Not many places in the country can claim to have this capability, but the scientists at the Hollings Cancer Center, with Dr. Britten's insight and leadership, have been successful in this."

Dr. Britten has extensive experience in medical oncology at a national level.



In addition to her Phase I clinical trials expertise, she specializes in the treatment of gastrointestinal cancers.

**Phase I clinical trials represent a special category of research focused on testing a new drug in a small group of people for the first time to evaluate safety and tolerability.*

HOLLINGS CANCER CENTER ADVOCATES FOR HPV AWARENESS

Armed with evidence that the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) causes most cervical cancers, many head and neck cancers, and an increasing number of other cancers, Hollings Cancer Center is working to promote awareness of the HPV vaccine. The vaccine has been available since 2006, but is still underutilized in our state. Over half of females eligible to receive the vaccination in South Carolina have not received all three doses of the HPV vaccine, and only a small percent of males have been vaccinated at all. Cancer control experts stress that we are not getting optimal benefit from a proven cancer prevention tool.

HCC recently received a grant from the National Cancer Institute to investigate why more people aren't getting the HPV vaccine. Eight town hall meetings were held this summer across the state to learn what people know and think about the vaccine in South Carolina. Locations included Greenville, Columbia, and Charleston, as well as the smaller communities of Orangeburg, Florence, Clinton, Dillon, and Aiken. Researcher Kathleen Cartmell, PhD, an assistant professor in the College of Nursing

and organizer of the town halls, reports that her team found limited awareness of the vaccine and its benefits. Dr. Cartmell and fellow HPV researcher Jennifer Young Pierce, MD, plan to utilize the input from these town hall meetings to develop a community-based intervention to improve the HPV vaccination rate in South Carolina. Goals include promoting the vaccine in the media and engaging schools, pharmacies, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to educate communities about the benefits of being vaccinated.

The HPV vaccine is recommended for females and males between the ages of 11-12, with catch-up vaccination recommended for females through age 26 and males through age 21. In the past two legislative sessions, the South Carolina Legislature has considered a bill that would allow distribution of information about the HPV vaccine to middle school children and their families. This bill will be considered again this year.



They all have dreams. Cancer isn't one of them.

If you had the chance to prevent cancer, would you? Talk to your doctor today about the HPV vaccine and your child.



COMPETITIVE FISHERMAN TACKLES CANCER

A long-time professional sport fisherman, Al Harman has traveled the world with a fishing pole. He was on the winning 2001 Blue Marlin World Cup team (fishing out of Portugal), and he's part of the world-record-holding team for reeling in a 573-pound Blue Marlin on a 4-pound test line, a record that stands from 1995. When Al was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma, a type of kidney cancer, in 2006, he had surgery in his hometown. When the cancer returned two years later, he and wife, Lisa, decided to explore other options.

"We wanted to find someone who specializes in kidney cancer and a place that could offer us better options," Lisa explains. "Our research led us to Hollings Cancer Center and Dr. Drabkin."

Dr. Harry Drabkin is a nationally recognized kidney cancer expert who specializes his practice and laboratory research on renal cell carcinoma. When Dr. Drabkin suggested a clinical trial, one on which he served as Principal Investigator, Al said he wanted to try it because he knew it would give him the best chance. Years later, Dr. Drabkin recommended transitioning to a new therapy, one also being delivered through a clinical trial on which Dr. Drabkin is the Principal Investigator. Al reports that he has done well on this therapy for several years now.

Now seven years post-recurrence, Al tries to fish every day, mainly in the Congaree River right in his back yard, but he still fishes off-shore a few times a year. Whether close to home or far off-shore, he casts his lines in a very laid-back manner and enjoys every moment, grateful to have reeled in the biggest catch of all—a chance to survive cancer.



HOLLINGS HEROES

Congratulations to our Hollings Heroes Dragon Boat team! They raised more than \$12,000 to support cancer survivorship, placing second out of 48 teams in fundraising at the 2015 Charleston Dragon Boat Festival. (They also finished seventh in the actual race.) HCC Thoracic Nurse Navigator Claudia Miller served as captain for the team of cancer survivors and Hollings staff. The annual event was started at Hollings Cancer Center in 2003; Hollings gifted the original boats to Dragon Boat Charleston when they became an independent nonprofit organization.



HOLLINGS MEMBERS HONORED AT FACULTY CONVOCATION



Several key members of the Hollings Cancer Center team were honored at MUSC Faculty Convocation August 25. Congratulations to these worthy recipients.

Outstanding Clinician Award

Dr. Saurabh Chhabra was named the 2015 MUSC Foundation Outstanding Clinician. This award honors faculty who have made outstanding contributions to patient care at MUSC and are role models for residents, students, and faculty colleagues. In congratulating Dr. Chhabra, colleague Dr. Robert Stuart noted how rare it is for a faculty member to win this award in his first three years of service at MUSC. Dr. Chhabra is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, with a focus on hematologic malignancies and stem cell transplantation.

Peggy Schachte Research Mentor Award

Dennis K. Watson, PhD, received the Peggy Schachte Research Mentor Award, given annually to honor a faculty member who is widely recognized as an outstanding research mentor who encourages and supports the advancement of others as successful, extramurally funded investigators.

Dr. Watson is a Professor of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine and serves as the Hollings Cancer Center Associate Director of Education & Training. Internationally recognized in the areas of gene discovery and molecular oncology, he has served in a scientific leadership role with the HCC since 1993, and has mentored 60 pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and junior faculty in addition to serving on thesis committees for more than 50 graduate students.

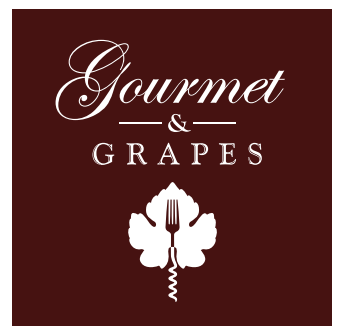
GOURMET & GRAPES EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS IN FUN AND FUNDING

The Seventh Annual Gourmet & Grapes at The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort was a tremendous success, exceeding its goal and raising over \$250,000 to support the Hollings Cancer Center.



“This year’s event was our most successful yet, pushing the cumulative total raised over the \$1 million mark,” reports Debbie Bordeau, Director of Development for Hollings Cancer Center. “We’re so thankful for the support from those who attended, the chefs and wineries who participated, and to Kiawah Island Golf Resort for their tremendous support of this event through the years.”

The three-day food and wine event showcases some of the best chefs from throughout the Southeast. A 2015 highlight was the reunion of the four chefs who formerly oversaw the kitchen at The Woodlands Inn, representing a 20-year span at this five-star property. Though the chefs had never worked together as a team, their camaraderie was evident and the food exquisitely prepared. Other new events included a session with the *Post and Courier*’s food critic and a golf outing on The Ocean Course.





MUSC Distinguished Faculty Service Awards

Two long-time Hollings Cancer Center physicians and researchers were among the three individuals honored with the MUSC Distinguished Faculty Service Award. This award was enacted by the University Board of Trustees to recognize and honor faculty members at MUSC who, over a substantial portion of their careers, have provided exceptional and sustained service and contributions in teaching, research, health care, and/or public service to the university and the citizens of South Carolina.

Joseph M. “Buddy” Jenrette, MD, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology. He has served at MUSC since completing his residency here in 1983 and is largely credited with building the Department of Radiation Oncology from its infancy to the integral role it holds today as part of the multi-disciplinary care at Hollings. Dr. Jenrette was recognized for positively affecting the lives of thousands of patients and contributing to the training of generations of faculty and students. His nomination highlighted the department’s consistently high patient and staff satisfaction ratings as well as the fact that the MUSC Radiation Oncology Residency Program is recognized as one of the top programs nationally.

William T. Creasman, MD, joined MUSC as a gynecologic oncologist and Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1986. He served as the Department Chair for 14 years and was one of the early leaders in developing the Hollings Cancer Center. Dr. Creasman’s nomination noted his exceptional bedside manner combined with his internationally renowned clinical expertise. The co-author of the foremost textbook on gynecologic cancers, he has been a driving force in the development and maturation of this field both nationally and internationally and has impacted countless women with gynecological cancers.



Make plans now for Gourmet & Grapes 2016!

We are already busy lining up wonderful new events and surprises. Mark your calendars for February 19-21 at The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort. You can follow news and updates about the event at www.gourmetandgrapes.com.



\$1 MILLION GIFT ESTABLISHES SCHOLARSHIP IN GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY



Established through a planned gift of \$1,000,000, the Sheryl Sirisky Prisby Scholarship will advance translational research in the area of gynecologic oncology by supporting medical students, graduate students, MD/PhD students, post-doctoral fellows and clinical research scholars who have dedicated their lives to searching for new ways to prevent, diagnose, treat, and cure gynecological cancers.

The Hollings Cancer Center is most grateful to Matt Prisby, who made the gift in honor of Sheryl, his wife of 26 years who died of cervical cancer in 2014. Matt was especially appreciative of the care Sheryl received from Hollings Cancer Center physician and researcher Dr. Jennifer Young Pierce, and was inspired to give back so others can be trained in gynecologic oncology. Although the full \$1 million gift will not be realized until after his death, he wanted to have an immediate impact. Matt made the commitment to begin making annual contributions now so that the scholarship program can begin immediately.

This generous gift supports our efforts to further raise the level of care for cancer patients through advanced translational research. Beneficiaries will work in the clinic to understand the problems that cancer patients face, and then research more effective ways to address them. Matt's wish is that the Sheryl Sirisky Prisby Scholars will become leaders in the field of gynecological oncology and that Sheryl's legacy of strength and compassion will inspire them throughout their careers.

The Sheryl Sirisky Prisby Scholarship is the Hollings Cancer Center's first scholarship dedicated exclusively to the advancement of work in women's cancers. We are extraordinarily grateful that Matt Prisby chose to honor his wife's legacy with this gift.

FLOYD FORUM TO HIGHLIGHT WOMEN'S CANCERS

After Linda Floyd's experience with cancer, she and her husband Dalton wanted to help raise awareness of women's cancers. Through discussions with the Hollings Development team, the Floyds decided to create an annual women's cancer lecture and community forum. Their recent \$50,000 gift makes this vision a reality. This community-focused event will be geared to the lay public, featuring experts and guest speakers in the areas of women's cancers in open dialogue about preventing, diagnosing, treating, and surviving these cancers. Hollings Cancer Center extends a heartfelt thank you to the Floyds for their gift and vision. We are excited to announce that the first annual Floyd Forum on Women's Cancers will be held April 27 at Founders Hall at Charles Towne Landing. For more information, contact us at 843-792-9335.



The Hollings Cancer Center Development Team welcomes the opportunity to explore ways that you may become involved. Please contact us at 843-792-9335 if we can assist with your giving interests or plans.

■ Highlights

DR. MATTHEW J. CARPENTER RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR SCIENCE

Dr. Matthew J. Carpenter, an associate professor at the Medical University of South Carolina and researcher with the MUSC Hollings Cancer Center, is the recipient of the 2015 Governor's Young Scientist Award for Excellence in Scientific Research. The Governor's Awards for Excellence in Science, administered by the South Carolina Academy of Science, were established in 1985 to honor an individual or team within the state whose achievements and contributions to science in South Carolina merit special recognition. The Young Scientist Award is directed to a gifted young researcher who has demonstrated the potential for major contributions to his discipline. Dr. Carpenter is an associate professor with the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and conducts research through the Hollings Cancer Center's Cancer Control Program, focusing on tobacco use and smoking cessation techniques. Dr. Carpenter's nomination noted that since joining MUSC in 2006, he has been extraordinarily productive both in pursuing high-impact, innovative independent research and in collaborating with other researchers to strengthen their research teams. As an internationally recognized tobacco control researcher, his work holds great promise for changing clinical approaches to tobacco addiction.



DR. ANTHONY J. ALBERG PARTICIPATES IN REPORT ON RAISING THE MINIMUM AGE TO BUY CIGARETTES

Increasing the minimum age of legal access (MLA) to tobacco products will prevent or delay initiation of tobacco use by adolescents and young adults and improve the health of Americans across the lifespan, according to a new report from the Institute of Medicine. HCC's Interim Director Anthony J. Alberg, PhD, served on the 13-person committee convened by the Institute of Medicine to study this issue.

The committee studied the likely reduction in tobacco-use initiation achieved by raising the MLA for tobacco products to either 19 years old, 21 years old, or 25 years. Raising the MLA to 21 likely will have a substantially greater impact on reducing the initiation of tobacco use than raising it to 19, they estimate. However, the added benefit of raising the minimum age beyond age 21 to age 25 would likely be minimal, the report says. Of those who have ever smoked daily, 90 percent first tried a cigarette before 19 years of age, and nearly all others tried their first cigarette before the age of 26. This strongly suggests that if someone is not a regular tobacco user by age 25, it is highly unlikely he or she will become one.



"Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and premature death in our society, and yet approximately one in five Americans still smoke cigarettes," commented Dr. Alberg. "This report assesses an important policy option and concludes that raising the minimum age for purchase of tobacco products will help to prevent youths from becoming smokers. Hopefully this report will stimulate discussions and action to raise the minimum legal age for purchasing tobacco products nationally and here in South Carolina."

DR. MARVELLA E. FORD RECEIVES NEW TRAINING GRANTS

A key element in studying disparities in healthcare involves including a diverse base of researchers. Marvella E. Ford, PhD, Associate Director for Cancer Disparities at Hollings Cancer Center, was recently awarded two multi-year grants (from the NCI and Department of Defense) designed to train new researchers from under-represented populations in an initiative called the South Carolina Cancer Health Equity Consortium: Summer Undergraduate Research Training Program. MUSC is partnering with the University of South Carolina and three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) – Claflin University, South Carolina State University, and Voorhees College – to create innovative, inter-institutional research and study opportunities to train HBCU undergraduates in the basics of research design and methods. The programs include a hands-on laboratory research training platform and career mentoring by some of the nation's leading cancer researchers at MUSC, with the goal of catalyzing a new generation of diverse biomedical scientists.



DR. WILLIAM T. CREASMAN RECEIVES AWARD FOR HUMANITARIANISM AND VOLUNTEERISM

William T. Creasman, MD, was recently awarded the 2015 Foundation for Gynecologic Oncology Humanitarianism & Volunteer Award for exemplary volunteer and outreach efforts in women's cancer care, research, or training. The award was presented during the Society for Gynecologic Oncology Annual Meeting on Women's Cancer and recognized Dr. Creasman's leadership in teaching gynecologic oncology to residents in Honduras and Africa, and his service on the steering committee of the Health Volunteers Overseas program. Dr. Creasman has made more than ten trips to Honduras, Africa, and Costa Rica to deliver medical care and train surgical residents there. He is widely regarded as a national leader in the specialty of gynecologic oncology and is co-author of *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology* (now in its 8th edition), the foremost textbook for medical students, residents, and other physicians in gynecologic oncology.





A National Cancer Institute
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Welcome New Hollings Faculty

Andrea M. Abbott, MD

Assistant Professor
Department of Surgery
Breast, Melanoma, and Sarcoma Surgery
From Moffitt Cancer Center

David Cachia, MD

Assistant Professor
Department of Neurosurgery
Neuro-oncology
From MD Anderson Fellowship

Virgilio V. George, MD

Associate Professor
Department of Surgery
GI / Colorectal Surgery
From Indiana University

Paul G. Goetowski, MD

Associate Professor
Department of Radiation Oncology
From Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center

Mark T. Hamann, PhD

Professor
SmartState Chair, Cancer Drug Discovery
College of Pharmacy
Division of Drug Discovery & Biomedical Sciences
From University of Mississippi

Bryan W. Heckman, PhD

Assistant Professor
Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
From MUSC Postdoctoral Fellowship

Andrew T. Huang, MD

Assistant Professor
Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Head and Neck Cancers
From MD Anderson Cancer Center

Juan S. Luque, PhD, MPH

Associate Professor
Department of Public Health Sciences
Cancer Control / Disparities Researcher
From Georgia Southern University

James F. McNab, MD

Associate Professor
Department of Radiation Oncology
From Beaufort Memorial Hospital

Daniel Y. Reuben, MD

Associate Professor
Department of Medicine
Division of Hematology/Oncology
GI Cancers, Sarcoma
From Yale-Smilow Cancer Center

Valeriy Sedov, MD

Assistant Professor
Department of Medicine
Division of Hematology/Oncology
Malignant Hematology/BMT
From Warren General Hospital, Titusville Area Hospital,
and Corry Memorial Hospital, PA

Eva M. Suarez, MD

Assistant Professor
Department of Radiation Oncology
Medical Director of Georgetown Radiation Therapy Center
From MUSC Radiation Oncology Residency Program

Jessica Thaxton, PhD

Assistant Professor
Department of Orthopaedics
From MUSC Postdoctoral Fellowship

Benjamin A. Toll, PhD

Associate Professor
Department of Public Health Sciences
Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences,
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