On The Cutting Edge
Message from the Interim Chair
Ken Azarow, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.A.P.

Change is in the air
As alumni and supporters, it is with you in mind that I consider all of the great changes happening here at OHSU and in surgery. Your experience as a resident or faculty member was likely one of a close-knit community. Your colleagues were only a few doors down in Mackenzie Hall and your patients were mostly from the area.
While that is still largely true, OHSU has expanded its community to include hospitals in Hillsboro, The Dalles, Coos Bay and Klamath Falls. We’re building up our Portland South Waterfront facilities and reaching out to Oregonians beyond the Portland metro area. As we make strides forward, it is with gratitude that I reflect back on this past year and admire all that our surgeons and OHSU leadership have accomplished and stood for. It is my sincere hope that you, our alumni, Mackenzie Society members and friends of the department, have reason to do the same.
As I write this, it’s been well over a year since I stepped into the position of interim chair. I remain indebted to all of our phenomenal faculty and staff and particularly to our superb division chiefs and vice-chairs. In addition to Mubeen Jafri, M.D., continuing as interim division chief of pediatric surgery, I have had the recent pleasure of overseeing the recruitment of two new division chiefs, both filled internally: Farah Husain, M.D. is our new division chief of bariatric surgery and Greg Landry, M.D., has taken over as division chief of vascular surgery.
After serving a remarkable 17 years as Chief of Vascular Surgery and 30 years with the department, Greg Moneta, M.D. is handing over the reigns to Greg Landry, M.D.
On top of leadership development within the department, we were pleased to welcome an unprecedented total of 12 new faculty members in 2017, a third of whom operate at least part-time out of an OHSU partner hospital.
The Department of Surgery is not alone in what was a year of profound change and growth; in addition to Sharon Anderson, M.D.’s appointment to OHSU executive vice president and dean of the School of Medicine, John Hunter, M.D. has recently accepted the position of executive vice president and CEO of the OHSU Health System. Renee Edwards, M.D., M.B.A., co-director of OHSU’s Center for Women’s Health, is OHSU’s new CMO. Mary Beth Martin, R.N., B.S.N., M.B.A. stepped into the role of vice president for Women’s and Children’s Services and anesthesiologist Chris Swide, M.D., is now on board as our new DIO/associate dean for GME.
On the cusp of these appointments was the announcement in October from President Joe Robertson, M.D., M.B.A. of his intention to retire this June at the end of the academic year. In the words of President Robertson, “OHSU’s future is as bright as ever. No leadership transition can dampen our prospects. Our mission is clear: Our strategic plan is successful. Our core values remain unchanged.”
At a time in our nation’s history that has often felt uncertain and filled with controversy, OHSU’s steadfast commitment to transparency, diversity, quality and service excellence has been a beacon to us all.
As many of you know our department is in the in the process of a departmental review. Our internal OHSU review, led by Fergus Coakley, M.D., chair of diagnostic radiology, should be complete by early spring. Although not scheduled I anticipate an external review to begin in late spring. I am extremely excited about this opportunity as we have not undergone a departmental review since before Dr. Hunter’s recruitment (18 years ago!). As a rule of thumb, this is intended to recur every 10 years. Once these reviews are complete, I expect that the dean will provide us with some guidance on our permanent leadership. Until such time, I remain steadfast in my dedication to this department and to our faculty in my role as interim chair.
One of the highlights for me as interim chair has been working more closely with our fourth and fifth year residents, stepping back in admiration as they surpass expectations in the OR and represent OHSU on the national stage for surgery residency education. Case in point: two of our fourth year residents, Heather Hoops, M.D. and Katherine Kelley, M.D., applied for and were among the select few residents chosen from around the country to be a part of ACGME’s highly anticipated Back to Bedside initiative, which kicked off this past October. You can read more about this on page 14.
As we move into spring, we’re looking forward to the John Campbell Lecture in Pediatric Surgery on May 7, presented by Anthony Sandler, M.D., surgeon-in-chief at D.C.’s Children’s National Health System. The Sam Liu Lecture will be on May 21, presented by David Mercer, M.D., McLaughlin Professor and chair of surgery at the University of Nebraska. And if you really want to mark your calendars, Sept. 17, 2018 is the date for this year’s Trunkey Lecture, delivered by John Flides, M.D., chair of surgery at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.
In closing, I’d like to direct you toward a special message to our Mackenzie Society members on page 7 with an update on the upcoming society leadership change, a revision of membership dues, and events to look forward to this coming year. Membership within the Mackenzie Society is one of the most tangible and significant ways to support our residency education program, sustaining its quality and jump starting its growth.
If our program is something you’d like to invest in, I hope you’ll consider joining!
Until next time, best wishes to you and yours.
Ken Azarow
Karen Brasel, M.D., M.P.H. traveled to Bangkok in July for her induction as an Honorary Fellow in the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand.

Between her new GME role, honorary fellow induction and receiving the Olga Jonasson Award, Karen Brasel, M.D., M.P.H. is having a moment.

Your first impression of General Surgery Residency Program Director Karen Brasel, M.D., M.P.H. is likely the top of her head; the renowned trauma surgeon and educator comes in at just under 5’2”. It’s your second impression that really sticks though. While she may need her own stool in the OR, her ability to command a room and inspire her residents to their highest potential is larger-than-life.

Dr. Brasel’s induction into the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand as an Honorary Fellow was a highlight of 2017. She traveled to Bangkok in July for the honor, as well as the opportunity to present at their 42nd Annual Scientific Congress.

Her contributions to the mentorship of women in surgery were recognized when she was awarded the 2017 Association of Women Surgeons Foundation Olga Jonasson Award at October’s ACS Clinical Congress.

And just shy of the new year, it was announced that Dr. Brasel was chosen as one of two assistant deans for OHSU graduate medical education, effective immediately. Her work as assistant dean will focus on internal development, assisting School of Medicine residency directors with program advancement while overseeing trainees and programs.

Dr. Karen Brasel is in all estimations a powerful figure in the fields of surgery and education today.
Albert Chi, M.D. is an OHSU trauma surgeon with a background in biomedical engineering. His clinical research is focused on improving the lives of individuals with traumatic injuries with an emphasis on motor control. Helping develop the world’s most sophisticated prosthetic arm, Albert seeks to revolutionize the way individuals with lost limbs conduct their everyday lives. He is also commissioned as a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

Join us for the John Campbell and Sam Liu Lectures this Spring at Grand Rounds!

John R. Campbell Lecture in Pediatric Surgery
Monday, May 7 | 7:30 a.m. | OHSU Auditorium
“Neuroblastoma: Tumor Vaccination and Adaptive Immune Resistance”
Anthony D. Sandler, M.D.
Senior Vice President and Surgeon-in-Chief
Joseph E. Robert Jr. Center for Surgical Care
Children’s National Health System, Washington, D.C.

Sam Liu Lecture
Monday, May 21 | 7:30 a.m. | OHSU Auditorium
“Attributes of a Surgical Leader”
David W. Mercer, M.D., F.A.C.S.
McLaughlin Professor and Chairman
Senior Vice President for Clinical Programs
University of Nebraska Medical Center

To view the entire 2017-2018 Grand Rounds schedule, visit www.ohsu.edu/surgery
A message from The Mackenzie Society

It was my true pleasure to connect with so many of you in San Diego during the October ACS meeting, catching up with both long-time and recently-joined members of the Mackenzie Society. As interim chair this past year, I’ve found myself in the unique position of hearing more often than I would otherwise from you, our alumni, which inevitably serves to bolster my already high opinion of our surgery education program.

Whether it’s at a Mackenzie Society dinner or when our paths happen to cross throughout the year at meetings or conferences, your expressed appreciation for the education and mentorship you received as residents is profound. I want you to know that your support of the OHSU residents that follow in your footsteps is significant and tangible. In 2017, we were able to not only provide electronic textbooks and surgical loupes for our residents, but also support their professional development through the purchase of SCORE (surgical curriculum on resident education), and research-related travel.

In an effort to significantly expand our membership in 2018, and in so doing increase the effectiveness of our residency program, we’ve revised our dues for those outside the Portland metro area. We’ve also chosen to dedicate 50 percent of dues received from those who enter the Chairman’s Circle to the Cliff and Karen Deveney Endowment Fund. The Deveney Endowment seeks to preserve the legacy of Cliff and Karen’s 25-year commitment to the Department of Surgery and the residency program by supporting education through visiting lecturers and events. To our outstanding alumni: if you haven’t already, I’d love to see you join our society ranks this year!

Speaking of endowments, this past fall brought two renowned surgeons to our campus: Dr. Douglas Wood from the University of Washington delivered the annual Donald D. Trunkey Lecture in September, followed by our William W. Krippaehne Lecture in December presented by ABS Executive Director Dr. Jo Buyske. We’re already looking forward to our Sam Liu Lecture on May 21, presented by Dr. David Mercer who chairs the Department of Surgery at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. If you are in the area, I encourage you to attend!

Before I close, I would like to take a long pause and thank Richard Mullins, M.D. for serving as President of The Mackenzie Society for the past two years. His leadership and knowledge of the department and its alumni is incomparable. Our incoming president is equal to the task and someone most of you know and love: Jenn Watters, M.D. Jenn is now operating out of Bend, Ore. and began her term retroactively on January 1.

Allow me to once again extend my gratitude to you for your support of OHSU’s next generation of surgeons and wish you the very best in 2018. I hope to see you at one of our Mackenzie Society events soon!

- Ken Azarow

Join us! www.ohsu.edu/mackenzie-society

Marquam Hill and beyond

Integrating OHSU with Tuality Hospital and Portland Adventist to create a robust Portland-based network

If you graduated from the OHSU general surgery residency program in the last 10 years, you likely had the opportunity to perform a rural rotation, in either Coos Bay or Grants Pass. In fact, you may be living and practicing in one of those towns right now as a result. For many years, OHSU has been strengthening its affiliate relationships and partnering with external hospitals for the purpose of offering exceptional health care to more Oregonians.

Nine of our current 70 full-time faculty now work primarily outside the Portland metro area.

Those efforts have effected increasingly visible change throughout OHSU and within the Department of Surgery. Since 2015, the department has hired surgery faculty to practice exclusively at an affiliate or partner hospital. Nine of our current 70 full-time faculty work primarily outside the Portland metro area.

The surgery outreach and rural residency rotation began by John Hunter, M.D. and then-program director Karen Deveney, M.D. was just the tip of the iceberg in terms of extending advanced care to Oregon. It changed the look of the department and OHSU as a whole.

Our current partnerships with Tuality Healthcare and Adventist Health Portland allow surgeons to work with local providers to optimize the unique qualities of each facility. Hillsboro and east Portland residents now receive more services and better comprehensive care in their own community.

Of course, improved health care is more than just a better surgical outcome or disease treatment. The Department of Surgery outreach affiliations strive to improve access to multidisciplinary care of people throughout the region and enhance educational and professional interactions with community care providers. Through shared research, education and best practice policies, we’re able to expand our technology, better utilize telemedicine and improve overall care. The standardization and integration of operational areas allows OHSU and partner hospitals to work toward reducing the cost of that care as well.

Looking forward, OHSU is working toward additional partnerships and affiliations throughout the state, improving access to a significant patient population.
ECMO Gives a Lifeline to Heart Attack Patient

After CPR failed nine times, Peter Clark was given one last life-saving attempt: Extracorporeal Life Support

Membrane Oxygenation, or ECMO. ECMO is a treatment that uses an external pump to temporarily support the heart and/or lungs. In Peter’s case, his heart was the failing organ, unable to perform its essential function of pumping blood to the lungs and back through the body.

ECMO involves inserting large tubes at either the neck or groin, accessing a major vein and connecting to an external machine that both pumps and oxygenates the blood for the patient. The pump removes the carbon dioxide and sends life-giving blood back through the body.

Peter was put on ECMO the evening of his heart attack, falling in and out of consciousness and entirely reliant on ECMO for nine days. On the tenth day, Peter’s heart recovered enough strength to resume functioning on its own. He says he can still clearly recall what it felt like to emerge from life support: “When I finally came out of it, I felt like a baby turtle; I couldn’t move from my back and I was unable to roll over. I had to have help to stay in a sitting position.”

Peter began cardiac rehabilitation soon after and a year later was able to report he’s had no additional heart problems. It’s been a slow recovery but he knows just how close he came to losing everything. He says his first thank you note was to his wife’s CPR instructor.

He and Elise recently celebrated their 41st wedding anniversary and are looking forward to the coming summer spent with family, their four children and three grandchildren. They’re happy to take it slow and appreciate the things in life that mean the most.
OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital is first in the Pacific Northwest to be ACS-verified as both a Level 1 pediatric trauma center and as a site for children’s surgery.

Doernbecher Children’s Hospital is one of just five nationwide to earn both distinctions.

“This acknowledgement means that families can be assured that from the moment they walk through our doors, they will receive the highest-quality care, specifically designed to meet the needs of their child,” said Ken Azarow, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.A.P., interim chair of surgery and surgeon-in-chief, at OHSU and OHSU Doernbecher.

Doernbecher Children’s Hospital is one of just five nationwide to earn both distinctions.

Surgery care tailored to the needs of every age, size and diagnosis.

To achieve Level 1 verification, OHSU Doernbecher had to meet the rigorous capability and performance guidelines set forth by the ACS. Multidisciplinary, high-quality trauma and surgery care must be tailored to the needs of children of every age, size and diagnosis. In addition to a pediatric emergency department staffed by trauma-verified providers, OHSU Doernbecher is home to the state’s sole children-only operating rooms. Here, physicians, nurses, anesthesiologists and their teams have specialized training in pediatric surgical care, and conduct nearly 9,000 procedures annually.

“These ACS verifications underscore OHSU Doernbecher’s dedication to improve the trauma, surgical and general health care of all children across Oregon and Southwest Washington,” said OHSU President Joe Robertson, M.D., M.B.A. “To expand on this commitment and fulfill our responsibility as the region’s first children’s facility to obtain both verifications, we look forward to partnering with pediatric hospitals and health care providers across the region to help ensure that every child is able to receive the best care possible.”

Select requirements of ACS-verified Level 1 pediatric trauma and surgery centers include:

- Proven expertise, resources and capacity to deliver timely, safe and multidisciplinary trauma and surgical care, around the clock, for even the most complex and rarest of cases.
- Immediate availability of board-certified or board-eligible pediatric specialty anesthesiologists, pediatric surgeons, subspecialty children’s surgeons, neonatologists, pediatric intensivists, pediatric emergency physicians, trauma-credentialed nurses and social workers, and child life specialists.
- Employment of an integrated, concurrent performance improvement and patient safety program to ensure optimal care and continuous improvement in care.
- Education, training, leadership and research in the field of pediatric surgery and trauma, including residency and fellowship training for the next generation of pediatric health care specialists.
Drs. Heather Hoops and Katherine Kelley aren’t alone in their accomplishments within our residency program, but they do tend to stand out. Their research is awarded, their ideas innovative and this last fall they took the national stage for their joint proposal on improved resident education.

It was March 2017 that the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education announced the launch of its highly anticipated Back to Bedside initiative. To its credit, the program was created by residents for residents with the intent of funding efforts to improve resident-patient interaction while reducing burnout.

Back to Bedside is an ACGME sponsored program created by residents for residents.

Residents around the country responded with 223 proposals for improvement, the quality and innovative thinking behind which led to the ACGME increasing their specified number of awards from five to 30. Drs. Hoops and Kelley were among the 30 selected. They met with the other awardees for the first time on October 26 in Chicago to kick off the program.

Drs. Hoops and Kelley’s proposal focuses on improving resident-patient interaction by inviting patients to participate in their weekly resident education conferences. They reference studies that document the overwhelming incidence of surgeon burnout due to depersonalization from the increasing burden of medical documentation and decreased time spent with patients. In addition, studies demonstrate a disconnect between the information surgeons provide patients in clinic and the type of information patients and families want to hear.

The overwhelming incidence of surgeon burnout due to depersonalization of the patient has been documented by multiple studies.

Beginning in February 2018, faculty-identified surgery patients were invited to participate in the Department of Surgery's resident education conferences on a condition relevant to their disease or prior surgical procedure. By having patients and their families discuss their experiences in the pre-operative and post-operative settings, Drs. Hoops and Kelley hope to improve the physician-patient relationship by helping residents more fully appreciate what their patients experience before and after certain procedures.

Over the next two years, Drs. Hoops and Kelley will work with faculty advisor and Program Director Karen Brasel, M.D., M.P.H. to disseminate their model to additional OHSU departments, presenting their results to a national audience following completion of the two-year term. Their work, as well as the efforts of the entire Back to Bedside initiative, shows great promise for improving the health of both patients and providers.

In a statement from ACGME following October's kick off:

“We are thrilled with the engagement from residents and fellows around Back to Bedside. Our hope is to cultivate a community of practice around physician and patient well-being by sharing strategies, resources, and processes developed through this initiative.”
A Resident’s Journey: Intern Year

First Year Resident Caitlin Harrington, M.D.

“**My intern year started in an epic fashion** - I was covering nights for the emergency general surgery, trauma and transplant services over Fourth of July weekend. To say I was excited was an understatement - I had been preparing for this day for a very long time. That excitement, however, was tempered by some trepidation. I was about to find out if I could cut it. It was game-time. I emailed my mentor hours before my shift started to ask for last minute advice. He responded with three words - ‘You are ready.’

The mantras of my teachers echoed in my ears as I moved through the shift:

*Surgeons don’t make excuses, they get results.*

As a medical student, if you try your best but still need help, there is an intern to ultimately complete the task. When you’re the intern, you get it done. Period. Figure it out.

*The number one rule of surgery is don’t screw up.*

As an OHSU Department of Surgery, we know that we’re in the business of saving lives. We’re constantly looking for ways to improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. That’s why we’re excited to announce the winners of our annual PCSA Awards Best Resident Paper.

**PCSA Awards Best Resident Paper**

Research Resident Raphael Byrne, M.D. was one of four residents awarded by the PCSA.

Colorectal surgeon Liana Tsikitis, M.D. was abuzz last October when the news came in: her mentee, resident Raphael Byrne, M.D., was a finalist for the Resident Prize at the Pacific Coast Surgical Association’s 89th annual meeting.

Dr. Byrne’s selected abstract was entitled, “**Who Undergoes Cytoreductive Surgery and Perioperative Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy (CRS/PIC) for Appendiceal Cancer?: An Analysis of the National Cancer Database (NCDB).**

“You have been chosen as one of four finalists.”

Each year, the PCSA selects the highest rated resident abstract from each of their four caucuses to compete for the first place award at their February annual meeting. Although Dr. Byrne did not end up coming in first, his relevant research and contributions to improved cancer care were awarded and celebrated.

OHSU has long been an influential force within the PCSA. OHSU’s own Richard B. Dillehunt, M.D. was one of its founding members in 1925. Vice Chair for Surgery Education Karen Deveney, M.D. is the PCSA’s immediate past-president.

**Spring Sweep for Surgery**

Surgery residents and faculty sweep the GME Improvement Science Symposium

Our surgery residents made it look easy at February’s Improvement Science Symposium sponsored by OHSU GME. Submitted abstracts were required to focus on one of the following four areas:

- **Quality Improvement**
- **Patient Safety**
- **Affordability**
- **Service Excellence**

Residents Heather Hoops, M.D. and Tarin Worrest, M.D. won 2nd and 3rd place, respectively, in the poster competition.

Heather Hoops, M.D. won the People’s Choice Award for her Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) presentation.

General Surgery was awarded Outstanding Program with the most accepted submissions, receiving funds for future improvement work.

The Outstanding Mentor award went to Brett Sheppard, M.D., who received the most nominations by trainees.

**Pictures above:** Brett Sheppard, M.D., Missy DeSouza, M.D., Tariin Worrest, M.D., Kate Kelley, M.D., Heather Hoops, M.D. and Karen Brasel, M.D.

**All Together Now: Congratulations!**

Our newly matched 2018-2019 General Surgery interns each got a welcome call from this year’s research residents. Here’s to our incoming class!

Marco Aru | University of Mississippi SOM
Arthur Affleck | UNC Chapel Hill SOM
Alexis Bagwell | Indiana University SOM
Krystle Collins | Columbia University SOM
Spencer Degerstedt | OHSU SOM
Jennifer Edmondson | Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Cami Forton | OHSU SOM
Amelia Glazier | Rosalind Franklin University
Sam Gayer | Case Western SOM
Xiao-Yue Han | OHSU SOM
Andrea Horvath | OHSU SOM
Alan Keller | University of Missouri-Columbia SOM
Hans Kim | SUNY - Upstate
Ryan Randle | UCLA/Drew Med Ed Program
Gregory Rufener | Creighton University SOM
Julia Saltalamacchia | Emory University SOM
Ashley Sweet | Perelman SOM at UP
Samuel Torres Landa F. | Autonomous University of Queretaro
Samantha Wala | Rosalind Franklin University
Cate Wetzel | Texas Tech University SOM
Doubling Survival by 2020

Early Detection Targeted Grant awarded to Brett Sheppard, M.D. by the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

In Dr. Brett Sheppard’s awarded PanCAN proposal, he states that, in addition to provider awareness and inequity, the greatest hurdle to early detection of pancreas cancer is a lack of technology. Current methods lack the sensitivity and specificity needed to identify low-levels of biomarkers present in early disease.

He goes on to say that even though the last 50 years have seen significant gains in our understanding of cancer biology, we have not made comparable advances in detecting the disease while at a stage that could be treated by surgery and chemotherapy.

Early detection of cancer is a technology problem.

With the awarded grant, Dr. Sheppard’s team is able to devote considerable resources toward developing methods to detect early inflammatory markers while the cancer is still treatable and curable. His project is titled, “Blood-based and imaging biomarkers of PDAC still treatable and curable. His project is titled,”

The shared goal of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network and its grant recipients is to accelerate progress and double pancreatic cancer survival by 2020.

Mayo, Billingsley Tackle Circulating Tumor Cells with Horizon Initiative

The Horizon Cancer Prevention and Control Initiative has funded another 11 collaborative pilot projects

The Horizon Initiative is a cancer prevention and control collaboration between OHSU Knight Cancer Institute and Oregon State University.

Among those recently awarded were Surgical Oncology Assistant Professor Skye Mayo, M.D. and Division Chief Kevin Billingsley, M.D. Together with PI Missy Wong, Ph.D. and a team of OHSU and OSU GI researchers, they are working to refine circulating tumor cell signatures to facilitate early detection of colorectal cancer.

CTCs provide live information about a patient’s disease status.

Circulating tumor cells are the cells that have shed from the primary tumor into the circulatory or lymphatic system. They are responsible for the spread of cancer in the body. They are also detectable early on in those with metastatic tumors. Correctly identifying CTCs in a blood sample can serve as a “liquid biopsy” to determine disease progression and provide early detection.

Learn more about the Horizon Initiative and its funded projects: bit.ly/2FaqGVC

Highest Award in Cancer Education

John Vetto, M.D. receives the 2017 Margaret Hay Edwards Medal

John Vetto, M.D. was awarded the 2017 Margaret Hay Edwards Medal by the Advisory Committee of the American Association for Cancer Education (AACE) at the recent International Cancer Education Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Edwards Medal is the highest award given to cancer educators.

Dr. Vetto has been past president of the AACE and a multi-term grant reviewer for the National Cancer Institute Subcommittee G, which reviews educational and career development (“K”) awards. Dr. Vetto has also been a co-Principal Investigator on NCI R-25 grants exploring best practices in cancer education, resulting in extensive publication on the subjects of tumor boards, durable cancer education materials, and teaching cancer patient care skills to medical students, residents, and providers. Dr. Vetto is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Cancer Education, published by Springer.

Previous winners of the Edwards Medal include Michael Shimkin, the NCI Director of Cancer Education, Richard Smith, an Associate Director for Cancer Education (AACE) at the recent International Cancer Education Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Vetto has been past president of the AACE and a multi-term grant reviewer for the National Cancer Institute Subcommittee G, which reviews educational and career development (“K”) awards. Dr. Vetto has also been a co-Principal Investigator on NCI R-25 grants exploring best practices in cancer education, resulting in extensive publication on the subjects of tumor boards, durable cancer education materials, and teaching cancer patient care skills to medical students, residents, and providers. Dr. Vetto is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Cancer Education, published by Springer.

Early Detection and Targeted Treatment

Colorectal surgeon Liana Tsikitis, M.D., M.C.R. chairs the OHSU Committee on Cancer

Winning the fight against cancer is about early detection and targeted treatment. Colorectal surgeon Liana Tsikitis, M.D., M.C.R. is tackling both as the new OHSU Committee on Cancer chair. Together with her multidisciplinary team and the Department of Pathology, she is working to ensure that all OHSU cancer patients receive specific molecular testing according to their cancer site to allow for tailored cancer treatment therapy.

Dr. Tsikitis’ particular research interests lie in understanding the genetic and immune profile of early onset colorectal cancer (occurring under age 45), which is currently on the rise. It is becoming clear that the immune microenvironment in colorectal cancer is a key factor in disease progression and treatment response. Targeting the immune microenvironment of malignant cells may lead to discovery of novel therapeutic agents. She recently traveled on scholarship to Cambridge, England to share her research and to form transcontinental collaborations.

Dr. Tsikitis is currently earning a health care-focused M.B.A. to be able to better address the variety of issues in the U.S. health care system, including access, quality, utilization and cost.
OHSU School of Medicine | Department of Surgery

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Questions or comments? Email On the Cutting Edge Editor Sara Szymanski at szymanss@ohsu.edu – we’d love to hear from you.