



FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Brenden-Colson Center Researchers and Supporters,

2019 was a busy and amazing year for the Brenden-Colson Center. In January we performed our first TPIAT islet cell purification and transplant procedure; in July we celebrated Rosie's formal investiture as the Krista L. Lake Chair in Cancer Research; in the fall we were awarded our first Center NIH grant, the Patient-Derived Models of Cancer U01; and in September we hosted our first educational conference for patients and families. We've also been heavily engaged in faculty recruitment activities.

This April we will welcome **Jonathan Brody, PhD**, to OHSU. Dr. Brody was recruited by BCCPC in collaboration with the Department of Surgery. He will serve as Vice Chair for Research within the department of Surgery, and as Associate Director for Translational Science for the Brenden-Colson Center. His research work focuses on developing a drug discovery program against HuR and related molecules in the pancreas, researching BRCA-mutant and HRD-deficient PDAC, and the use of PARP inhibitors in clinical trials; he also has extensive experience in building consortiums both inside and among institutions. For BCCPC, he will identify and contribute to high priority research projects related to pancreatic disease; initiate and grow our pancreas research collaborations; and help us to drive the development of our Center into one of the top pancreatic programs in the country, for research and clinically.



Plans to broaden our collaborations with the Knight, with other OHSU clinical departments, and with the pancreatitis and islet cell research community promise 2020 will be even more filled with new initiatives and accomplishments. In support of these, the Brenden family is gifting us with a five million dollar donation this year. With your help we will expand screening and enrollment of high-risk patients; start projects for pancreatitis/islet cell transplant research; expand trials for neoadjuvant (pre-surgery) treatment; participate in new precision medicine trials for metastatic disease; and accelerate our work to develop blood-based tests for early detection and therapeutic response. Thank you and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Brett" and the second is "Rosalie".

Brenden-Colson Center Co-Directors
Brett Sheppard, MD and Rosalie Sears, PhD

UPDATES and ANNOUNCEMENTS



On Sept. 14th, 2019, we held our **educational conference "A Pancreatic Cancer Roadmap – Guidance for Patients and Families,"** featuring faculty from ten OHSU departments as well as a guest speaker from PanCAN. We had 60 attendees and received very enthusiastic evaluations – they really appreciated the information and the chance to interact with doctors and researchers, and they loved the "Meet the Expert" break-out sessions. We are most grateful to the faculty who gave up part of their Saturday to make this important event possible, and to our advocates (Betty Booher and Sue Doescher) who helped with program development.

Charlie Lopez' "Window of Opportunity" or **WOO clinical trial** evaluating RAS and DNA damage response pathway targeted therapies (MEK inhibitors + PARP inhibitors) is currently enrolling subjects and we are doing assays in collaboration with the Knight SMMART program. This is a feasibility trial and BCCPC is supporting the drug costs, but we are planning an expanded trial with the support of pharmaceutical companies in future. Dr. Lopez (with Dan Marks and Stephanie Krasnow) is also building a multi-disciplinary group to study how lean body mass analysis might inform chemotherapy dosing calculations.

BCCPC's Total Pancreatectomy with Islet Auto Transplant or **TPIAT** program, which provides relief for chronic and recurrent acute pancreatitis sufferers, was relaunched with a new program manager (**Lisa Bloker, RN**) and a new islet purification lab lead (**Alexis Rwatambuga**). Our December patient opted for the procedure not only for pain relief but to prevent the onset of pancreatic cancer, for which he has a strong familial risk. BCCPC is now recruiting for a scientist to develop our non-cancer pancreas research.

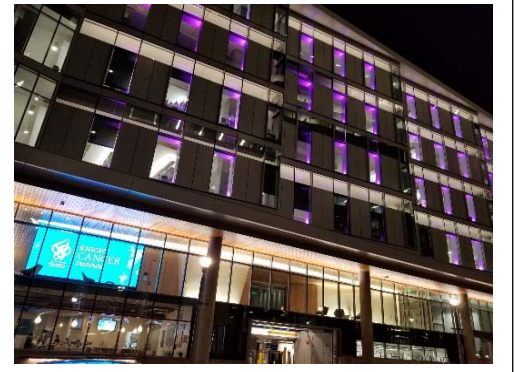
BCCPC has formed several new **partnerships**:

- We have joined the **PRECEDE consortium**, a collaboration of 35 institutions from around the world working to standardize specimen and data collection from high-risk individuals to create several new large research cohorts and engage in collaborative studies using the resource. This will be a very powerful way to leverage the members' combined high-risk clinic volumes to ask important questions.
- On a related note, Aaron Grossberg will be working on a pilot study on actigraphy and pancreatic cancer with Diane Simeone (NYU) and Tony Hollingsworth (U Nebraska) using "WHOOP" devices provided by **Project Purple**.
- Dan Marks is working with **Pfizer** to evaluate the measurement of GDF-15 levels as a liquid biopsy to measure disease burden and response to therapy, with BCCPC providing the serum samples from PDA patients for analysis. This GDF-15 marker work is also a springboard toward phase 2 trials of a GDF-15 blocking drug in patients with cancer cachexia.
- Dan is also collaborating with **OSU College of Pharmacy** researcher, Oleh Taratula (whose lab is in the RLSB), to develop an effective treatment for cachexia using nanoparticles loaded with messenger RNA. They received a two million dollar grant from the NCI that was chosen by the NIH to receive its prestigious Method to Extend Research in Time (MERIT) award status, in recognition of the promise that this line of research holds.
- In an exciting new partnership, **Adaptive** has agreed to perform sequencing on T cell receptors from blood samples in our OPTR biobank of patients with pancreatic cancer. By comparing results to a large cohort of normal bloods provided by Adaptive, we hope to learn about the immune response to pancreatic cancer; this insight could help us design better immune-based therapies.
- Also, the 3rd **PancWest** (the bi-annual research meeting that BCCPC founded) was held at Stanford in May 2019. The program featured speakers from Stanford, Genentech, Salk, Fred Hutch, UCSF and UCSD as well as Dan Marks, Rosie Sears and Mara Sherman from OHSU.

Two new Brenden-Colson **Fellowships** were awarded in 2019, to **Patrick Worth, MD** (Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery) and **Cory Wyatt, PhD** (Research Assistant Professor, Department of Diagnostic Radiation). Patrick is using his fellowship to support protected research time to study neuroendocrine cells and how they change their genetic programs to resist or evade conventional chemotherapies. Cory is working to create and validate a novel magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technique to quantitatively assess pancreatic tissue types. **The RFA for our 2020 Fellowship is now posted on O2, and we are taking applications until the deadline on April 30, 2020.**



The fall season also marked PanCAN's **Purple Stride** event (note the BCC tote bags), always a fun time even in the rain and cold, and **World Pancreatic Cancer Day** – recognized by the KCRB all decked out in purple.



BCCPC supported two **summer interns** in 2019 via the CDCB summer internship program. Cornell Univ undergrad, Ethan Agritelley, did a second summer in the Sears lab; and Milena Ben-Zaken from Columbia Univ was mentored by Mara Sherman. The Grossberg lab hosted Amy Liu, a first-year medical student at Nova Southeastern University; the project she worked on, "Perioperative complication rates following neoadjuvant therapy in pancreatic adenocarcinoma," was accepted for a poster at ASCO Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium 2020.

****If you want to mentor an undergrad next summer to work on pancreas, or know an undergrad who wants to intern, check out [CDCB's site](#) for application instructions, and let us know. BCCPC supports two summer interns each year for pancreas-related projects. The deadline is **February 14, 2020!******

We have a couple new faces in the **BCCPC staff** group: **Sharon Nellist** has taken over our calendaring and coordinating challenges; and **Sydney Owen** is our new Repository Steward, who can help you find the right specimens for your research project. Senior Research Assistants **Trent Waugh** (Sears lab) and **Heike Mendez** (Grossberg lab) have been around for just about a year, but maybe you haven't had a chance to meet them yet. (See our [website](#) for photos!) Our **LabKey database developer team** – Patrick Leyschok, Matt Viehdorfer, Georgia Mayfield and Andrew Silvernail – have moved from Comp Bio to the OCSSB but are still dedicated (with BCCPC's support) to creating the ideal system for us to merge our clinical and research data and analyses for patient benefit.

COMING SOON

BCCPC is working closely with the Digestive Health Center, the Knight, and the Department of Molecular & Medical Genetics to expand our pancreatic cancer **high-risk clinic**, so that annual surveillance is available to more patients who meet the criteria for high risk and patients with a known mutation that applies to more than one cancer can limit or combine screening visits. We are aiming for a single-intake system managed by OHSU's genetic counselors.

BCCPC research funding is available! However, procedures and deadlines for applying are going to change. We will no longer require presentation in the Working Group meeting (although we still strongly recommend it – it's a great way to get feedback on your proposed project), and we will limit submissions to two deadlines per year (dates TBA). Details will be posted on our O2 page soon.

Here is the **Pancreas Research Monthly** line-up for the next few months:

- February 14 Khashayar Farsad, MD, PhD (OHSU Interventional Radiology)
- March 13 [Marina Pasca Di Magliano](#), PhD (Univ of Michigan)
- April 10 Gordon Mills, MD, PhD (OHSU Precision Oncology)

Fridays at 9am in the Rood Pavilion – with breakfast treats! (We're open to suggestions for type of treats if you are looking for a change.) Please RSVP by accepting the Outlook invitation(s). Non-OHSU people who would like to attend, please contact brendencolsoninfo@ohsu.edu.

