

S U M M E R 2 0 2 1

# CancerNews

ORLANDO HEALTH®

Cancer Institute

## Orlando Health Honored On 100 Top Hospitals List

In April, Orlando Health was named to the IBM Watson Health 100 Top Hospitals list for 2021. The annual compilation is among healthcare's highest honors and recognizes excellence in clinical outcomes, operational efficiency, patient experience, financial health and for the first time, hospitals' contributions to community health with a focus on equity.

Orlando Health Orlando Regional Medical Center appeared on the Top Teaching Hospitals list. Its sister facilities – Orlando Health Dr. P. Phillips Hospital, Orlando Health South Seminole Hospital, Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children and Orlando Health Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies – also share in the honor.

And Orlando Health South Lake Hospital was honored among the Top Medium Community Hospitals. It also received an Everest Award for having an exceptionally high rate of improvement during a five-year period.

“Since 2015, our physicians and team members have worked mightily to enhance the quality of care we provide to patients and to establish an exceptional level of customer service,” said David Strong, president and CEO of Orlando Health. “This announcement serves as testament to their commitment to excellence and to our patients.”

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## Revolutionary Immunotherapy Uses Patients' Own Cells To Fight Melanoma

The Orlando Health Cancer Institute is one of only three locations in Florida using a revolutionary immunotherapy treatment for metastatic melanoma patients, **using their own tumor cells to fight the cancer.**

The treatment, which was recently featured in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, gives patients a second chance at survival against the deadliest forms of melanoma. Most patients enrolled in the tumor infiltrating lymphocytes (TIL) study have seen dramatic reductions in their tumor size just a few weeks after treatment.

**Dr. Sajeve S. Thomas, a board-certified medical oncologist and hematologist at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute, has been on the forefront — along with colleagues around the country — in the development of the TIL therapy.**

“It’s very encouraging to see my patients here and others all over the country respond so well to this therapy,” Dr. Thomas says. “We’re seeing significant results within 90 days of TIL therapy, and this is in patients with late-stage melanoma who have come to me after going through the traditional forms of treatment.”

The cellular therapy takes white blood cells, called tumor infiltrating lymphocytes, from a patient’s tumor and sends them to a lab for 22-day process that generates a TIL infusion product. Patients then receive an infusion of those cells to attack the cancer cells while leaving the healthy cells alone.

If surgery and other treatments are not enough to cure the patient’s cancer, TIL provides another option. “In many cases, this is really the last line of treatment for these patients,” Dr. Thomas says.

The Orlando Health Cancer Institute now is exploring using TIL therapy in lung, head, neck and cervical cancers, as well as first-line melanoma.

[OrlandoHealthCancer.com](http://OrlandoHealthCancer.com)

# Prostate Cancer Pre-Treatment Eases Radiation Side Effects

A new procedure to help protect a nearby organ at risk (OAR) during prostate cancer treatment is now available at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute.

Because of the proximity of the rectum to the prostate, radiation therapy can sometimes cause unintended damage to the rectum, leading to diarrhea, pain and bleeding.

In a minimally invasive, outpatient procedure, physicians use a small needle to insert SpaceOAR Hydrogel between the prostate and the rectum, creating a temporary barrier and protecting the rectum from radiation during treatment.

“We are excited to be able to offer this latest technology in prostate cancer treatment to our patients” says Dr. Akash Nanda, a board-certified radiation oncologist and director of urologic and hematologic radiation oncology at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute. The procedure typically takes 10 to 15 minutes.

In a randomized clinical study, men who underwent radiation therapy without SpaceOAR Hydrogel were eight times more likely to experience a decline in bowel, urinary and sexual function when compared with men who underwent radiation therapy with SpaceOAR Hydrogel, at a median follow-up of three years.

SpaceOAR Hydrogel, which the Food and Drug Administration cleared for clinical use, remains stable during radiation therapy and is gradually absorbed by the body after radiation treatment has been completed.

Hydrogel is 90 percent water and is similar to materials used for other implants, such as surgical sealants used in the eye, brain and spine.

Other than skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, according to the American Cancer Society. An estimated 250,000 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year, with radiation therapy being one of the cornerstones of prostate cancer therapy.

For more information on treatments for prostate cancer, call the Orlando Health Cancer Institute at (321) 841-1869.

## Tumor Boards' Goal: Unified Care for Patients

In virtual and hybrid tumor board meetings, Orlando Health Cancer Institute physicians collaborate with a wide range of experts – from neurosurgeons and radiation oncologists to speech therapists and nurse navigators – on diagnoses and treatments for their patients.

**The goal: to provide unified, comprehensive care.**

“Tumor boards are a staple in our care plan and the touchstone where all disciplines interface in real time to tackle the most acute or difficult problems,” says Dr. Nick Avgeropoulos, co-director of the Brain and Spine Tumor Program at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute. “The more eyes and ears that get in on a case, the better the outcome.”

The tumor boards can lead to different treatments, such as proton radiation therapies; clinical trials including vaccines or devices; and innovative surgical technologies, which can get better surgical resections for tumors or control epilepsy that doesn't respond to medication.

In a typical month, about 40 tumor boards across several cancer subspecialties, including brain, breast, gastrointestinal, ENT and thoracic, are held to discuss complicated cases and try to reach consensus on the best specific and individualized treatment.

A physician who has never met the patient, for example, can give an unbiased opinion that may change the trajectory of that patient's care.

“Even if you're not on the case, it can make the difference in someone's life. And you may not even know it. That's the best kind of input that exemplifies what the higher purpose of the tumor board is,” Dr. Avgeropoulos says.

In-person tumor boards shifted to virtual and hybrid meetings because of COVID-19, but that move has in many cases increased participation and access for cancer center specialists.

Physicians may be in the OR waiting areas about to do surgery or in their office across town, and they can still join the meeting virtually. This speeds up the timeliness of treatment plans and their start times.

Any physician who is affiliated with Orlando Health, involved with the care of a patient being presented at the tumor board or invited by the patient's provider can attend a tumor board.

“Clinicians are eager to participate in tumor boards,” Dr. Avgeropoulos says. “It is multidisciplinary care advocating for patients at its finest.”

For more information about tumor boards, email our coordinators at [R-OncologyCancerConferences@OrlandoHealth.com](mailto:R-OncologyCancerConferences@OrlandoHealth.com).

# The Fruits of Our Labors: Research Update

“Innovation drives progress” is the mantra of the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER). Each year, CDER publishes a list of new drug approvals. Investigators at Orlando Health Cancer Institute have participated in multiple research studies contributing to the ultimate approval of novel agents for treating cancer. Cancer Institute investigators studied these recently approved agents:

Approved in 2020	
<b>Margetuximab</b>	A monoclonal antibody to treat patients with HER-2 overexpressing or amplified breast cancer.
<b>Sacituzumab govitecan-hziy</b>	To treat patients with metastatic triple negative breast cancer who have received at least two prior lines of therapy for metastatic disease.
<b>Tucatinib</b>	To treat advanced or unresectable HER-2 positive breast cancer.
<b>Avapritinib</b>	To treat adults with unresectable or metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumor.
<b>Daratumumab</b>	Subcutaneous formulation to treat patients with multiple-myeloma in 5 indications.
<b>Rucaparib</b>	For patients with germline or somatic deleterious mutations in BRCA1/2 and have metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer.

In addition to adding new agents to the armamentarium of agents to treat cancer, our investigators have published papers in major medical journals and serve as resources to educate physicians and the clinical team in the appropriate use and safety signals of newly approved drugs.

While we often think of research in cancer as involving chemotherapy, radiation therapy, endocrine treatment, surgery or biologic treatment, two unique and pivotal trials are exploring other avenues of treatment.

The LUNAR: Pivotal Randomized, Open Label Study of Tumor Treating Fields (TTF) Concurrent with Standard of Care for Stage IV

Non Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) is led by principal investigator Dr. Jennifer Tseng.

The study is enrolling patients with stage IV NSCLC who have progressed on their first line platinum therapy. TTF will be combined with standard of care taxane or immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy compared to standard of care alone to determine if there is an overall survival advantage to the addition of TTF. The NOVO-TTF device is a portable, battery-operated system that delivers TTF at 150 Hz to the patient via transducer arrays placed on the skin aimed at the tumor. TTFs are a non-invasive regional antimitotic therapy delivering low intensity

electric pulses to the tumor and interfering with mitotic spindle formation as well as disrupting internal cellular structures leading to programmed cell death. This therapy has already gained FDA approval for glioblastomas.

Another unique study led by principal investigator Dr. Omar Kayaleh is investigating the role of supplemental vitamin D3 in combination with standard chemotherapy for patients with stage IV colorectal cancer. Alliance A021703 randomizes patients to standard of care with or without vitamin D3 supplementation.

Early epidemiologic research has shown reduction in incidence and death from cancer in patients living close to the equator. This led to the hypothesis that increased vitamin D production induced by exposure to UV radiation may explain the observation. Preclinical data shows that vitamin D may slow or prevent cancers, especially colorectal, breast, prostate and pancreatic cancer. This study will shed light on a supplement that may improve colorectal cancer outcomes.

## New Program Completes 10 Bone Marrow Transplants

**Since making its debut in January, the team with the Orlando Health Cancer Institute Bone Marrow Transplant & Cellular Therapy program has already completed allogeneic bone marrow transplants on seven patients and three autologous bone marrow transplants**

Bone marrow transplant specialist Dr. Yasser A. Khaled, who recently was named medical director of the Orlando Health Cancer Institute Bone Marrow Transplant & Cellular Therapy program, led the transplants for all the patients.

“It’s a very exciting time to be part of Orlando Health Cancer Institute and help enhance the array of treatment options we can offer our patients,” Dr. Khaled says. “BMT augments

the continuity of cancer care for our patients, enabling them to receive all the treatment they need right here in one place from the team of physicians and nurses they know and are familiar with.”

The BMT & CT program is working toward getting FACT accreditation and will submit its application once 10 allogeneic transplants have been completed, likely by the end of June or early July.

The program also soon will offer CAR-T therapy, with three products available to treat multiple myeloma, lymphoma and acute lymphocytic leukemia. In this therapy, patients’ T-cells are collected, genetically engineered by the manufacturer and then reinfused to target cancer cells.

**For more information, call (321) 843-2810.**

### Our Leadership Team

#### Margo Shoup, MD

President, Orlando Health  
Cancer Institute;  
Vice President, Orlando Health

#### Alyssia Crews

Assistant Vice President

#### Lindsay Jacques

#### Curtis Arnold

#### Nicholas Avgeropoulos, MD

#### Tomas Dvorak, MD

#### Luis Herrera, MD

#### Rafael Manon, MD

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## New President Takes Helm of Orlando Health Cancer Institute



Margo Shoup, MD, MBA becomes new president of the Orlando Health Cancer Institute and vice president of Orlando Health.

Dr. Shoup, who has considerable experience as a clinician and executive leader, has joined OHCI to oversee oncology services, and lead strategic growth and development plans at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute.

She comes from NuVance Health in Connecticut, where she served as senior vice president and chair of the NuVance Health Cancer Institute.

“Dr. Shoup’s leadership skills as an executive and physician will advance our cancer center to the next phase of our growth,” says Dr. Sunil Desai, president of Orlando Health Medical Group.

Dr. Shoup is a graduate of Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. She completed a general surgery residency and research fellowship at Loyola University in Maywood, Illinois, and a surgical oncology fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. After finishing her training, Dr. Shoup held

a variety of positions at Loyola University Medical Center and later was the regional director of oncology for Northwestern Medicine in Chicago. She earned an MBA at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and has more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and presentations. She also has served as principal investigator on several nationally funded and investigator-initiated research trials.

Before earning her medical degrees, Dr. Shoup was a nationally ranked pairs figure skater who represented the U.S. National Figure Skating Association at the 1984 Olympic trials.

Dr. Shoup and her husband, Michael Meyer, have been married for 30 years and have two grown children.

She is taking the reins from Dr. Daniel Buchholz, who served as interim president following the retirement of Dr. Mark Roh in April 2020.

Honored among the nation’s

# 100 TOP HOSPITALS

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