

WINTER 2021

# CancerNews

ORLANDO HEALTH®

Cancer Institute

## Dear Physician,

Our mission is to deliver extraordinary treatment and care every single time, treating each patient and each other like a member of our own family. As one of Florida's top cancer care providers, we've built our expertise on innovation, highly subspecialized experts and a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach. Our commitment to excellence includes:

- Creating an environment that ensures quality care and enhanced outcomes through innovation
- Leveraging data to offer the latest clinical trials and research opportunities for our patients
- Delivering leading-edge cancer technologies such as proton therapy, minimally invasive surgeries, cellular therapy and bone marrow transplants
- Offering accessible and convenient care with five treatment locations, 10 practice locations and options like virtual visits
- Providing support and complementary services for patients and their families through our integrative medicine department

Thank you for entrusting your patients' care to us. We consider that trust a solemn responsibility and we pledge to make your patients our priority.

Sincerely,

Daniel Buchholz, MD, Interim President  
Orlando Health Cancer Institute

## Inside this issue...

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## Now Offering Robotic-Assisted Technology for Lung Biopsy and Therapeutics

95 percent of lung cases at Orlando Health currently use this accurate and minimally invasive technology

Physicians at Orlando Health are the first in Central Florida to have new minimally invasive technology that allows them to reach further into the lungs to detect lesions and obtain tissue samples from lung nodules. "This minimally invasive technology promises to help oncologists diagnose lung cancer earlier and improve survival rates," says Luis Herrera, MD, a board-certified thoracic surgeon and the medical director of the Rod Taylor Thoracic Care Center at Orlando Health Cancer Institute.



*With the help of new robotic-assisted technology for lung biopsies, physicians at Orlando Health are reporting a 70 percent yield on 1 cm nodules in the peripheral bronchial pathway.*

Orlando Health is **the only facility in the nation to feature both the Ion™ Platform and the Monarch™ Platform**, the first FDA-cleared robot for diagnostic and therapeutic bronchoscopic procedures. Offering options for advanced diagnostic biopsies enables physicians to create a personalized approach for each patient.

Flexible robotics and small cameras with real-time vision allow greater access to smaller and hard-to-reach nodes. "Physicians are really pleased with how these new tools offer them greater control with less invasiveness, while also enhancing both imaging and patient safety," says Dr. Herrera.

### Both the Ion™ Platform and Monarch™ Platform offer these advantages:

- Successful biopsies on small and difficult-to-reach nodules
- Lower risk of a deflated or collapsed lung or other complications
- A faster and more accurate diagnosis
- Reduced false positives and false negatives with up to 90 percent accuracy
- Faster recovery time, with patients able to be up and walking the same day

"Being the first facility to offer both of these platforms continues our long history of pioneering the latest thoracic diagnostic and treatment options," says Dr. Herrera. "These tools are part of a comprehensive care program that includes robotic surgery, advanced radiation therapy and proton therapy. Together with an interdisciplinary group of cancer experts, this technology enables us to deliver the best possible cancer care."

**To contact the Rod Taylor Thoracic Care Center, call (407) 648-5384.**

# New Liver and Pancreatic Surgeon

Highlighting **Emilio Alonso, MD**



## **Emilio Alonso, MD** **Liver and Pancreatic Surgery**

Emilio Alonso, MD, has joined the cancer specialists at the Gastrointestinal Cancer Center. Dr. Alonso is a fellowship-trained surgical oncologist, board-certified in general surgery and specializing in hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery using minimally invasive options whenever possible.

In addition to patient care, Dr. Alonso participates in research projects involving translational tumor immunology and neoadjuvant chemotherapy and immunotherapy. He is a national and international presenter at medical conferences and has been published in peer-reviewed medical journals, such as *Molecular Pharmacology*, *Molecular Medicine* and *World Journal of Clinical Cases*. Dr. Alonso is a member of the American College of Surgery, Society of Surgical Oncology, American Pancreatic Association, International Hepato-PancreatoBiliary Association and Americas Hepato-PancreatoBiliary Association. He also sits on the International Relations Committee for the Americas HepatoPancreatico-Biliary Association.

**For more information about Dr. Alonso's services and how to consult with him, call (321) 841-1838.**



## **Introducing Expert Care in Bone Marrow Transplants and Cellular Therapy**

A promising tool in the fight against blood cancers makes its debut in January, when a new Orlando Health team performs its first bone marrow transplants.

The Orlando Health Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy program will offer innovative treatments for a range of disorders, including leukemia and lymphoma. It also will provide the service to high-risk patients, including those with comorbidities such as heart disease or uncontrolled cancer. The expert team is positioned to take advantage of new therapies emerging from the rapidly developing realm of cellular-based medicine.

With its initial procedures happening so soon, the program is off to a notable start. "That's important because it usually takes six months to a year for that first transplant," says Yasser A. Khaled, MD, who is board certified in hematology and specializes in blood and bone marrow transplantation as well as cellular therapy. Before joining the Orlando Health Cancer Institute, Dr. Khaled led the Blood and Marrow Transplant Center at Methodist Le Bonheur in Memphis. During his four-year tenure, that program emerged as one of the nation's top transplant centers, based on survival outcomes, according to the National Marrow Donor Program.

Initially, the Orlando Health program will focus on bone marrow transplants with plans to expand into pediatric cases and leading-edge cellular immune therapies, such as CAR-T. This approach is effective in treating acute lymphoblastic leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and is being tested against several other cancers.

Such therapies could be a game changer, with the patient's own immune cells modified to pinpoint targeted cells. "They can go out and find the cancer cells, wherever they are," Dr. Khaled says. "There's no such thing as a tumor that has spread too far."

The program and its pharmacy will be based on the downtown Orlando campus. For information, call (321) 843-2810.

**Orlando Health Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy program is led by Yasser A. Khaled, MD.** As director of a similar program at Methodist Le Bonheur in Memphis, Dr. Khaled led his team to achieve survival outcomes in the top 10 percent nationally, based on analytics from the National Marrow Donor Program.

# Leading the Way in Cancer Research

## Clinical Cancer Research Studies at Orlando Health Cancer Institute

To find answers for better treatments and improved outcomes, investigators at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute actively participate in clinical research trials for a broad spectrum of cancer presentations. At any given time, nearly 80 studies are open and enrolling patients, and 200 others are collecting scientific data in follow up. These are some of the pivotal studies currently enrolling at the cancer institute.

### Proton vs. Photon Radiation Therapy for Breast Cancer

At Central Florida's only cancer institute offering proton beam therapy, our expert team is studying the comparable effectiveness of proton vs. photon radiation therapy in treating breast cancer patients and to potentially lower the risk of cardiac complications. Led by Tomas Dvorak, MD, the study reviews patients receiving radiation to their lymph nodes to assess the effectiveness and tolerability of each therapy mode (RADCOMP Consortium Trial).

### NATALEE Global Trial for Adjuvant Treatment in Breast Cancer

A new class of drugs, the cyclin D kinase 4/6 inhibitors (CDK4/6i), has demonstrated significant improvements in progression-free survival and, in some cases, overall survival in metastatic hormone receptor + Her2neu negative breast cancer. In collaboration with the UCLA Translational Research I Oncology (TRIO) network, a CDK4/6i, ribociclib, is being studied as an adjuvant treatment with endocrine therapy for high-risk, early-stage, non-metastatic breast cancer in a global trial. The study is led by Ana Cuesta-Fernandez, MD.

### TRITON3 Trial for Prostate Cancer

This study examines the use of Rucaparib for patients with metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer with homologous recombination deficiency. Rucaparib is a poly(adenosin diphosphate [ADP]-ribose) polymerase enzyme inhibitor (PARPi). Patients with metastatic prostate cancer may harbor inherited or acquired mutations in the BRCA1, BRCA2 or ATM genes that code for proteins that repair damaged DNA by homologous recombination (HR) DNA repair. The use of PARPi in patients with HR defects can induce "synthetic lethality" in cancer cells and is being investigated in comparison to standard of care in patients with metastatic prostate cancer who have become resistant to anti-androgen therapy but have not received chemotherapy for their metastatic disease. Julio Hajdenberg, MD, is the principal investigator for the trial.

### Empowering an Immune Response to Attack Cancer Cells

How to supercharge a patient's immune system to attack cancer cells is being investigated by Sajeve Thomas, MD, in the IOV-COM-202 trial for patients with advanced, recurrent or metastatic squamous cell cancer of the head and neck or unresectable or metastatic malignant melanoma, or locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer. In this study, tissue is obtained from the patient's tumor and lymphocytes in the tumor are harvested in a laboratory and then grown to billions of cells. The patient then is prepped with chemotherapy and the billions of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes are transfused back into the patient, delivering a massive boost to the immune system to attack cancer. In addition, Interleukin 2 is administered to further enhance immune functioning.



**By Rebecca Moroosse, MD**

Director of Adult Oncology  
Research & Genetics

*Board certified in medical oncology, Rebecca Moroosse, MD, is the director of cancer research and the Cancer Genetics & High Risk Care Center for Orlando Health Cancer Institute. She is the author of several book chapters, many published refereed articles and an invited columnist for Orange Appeal magazine. She is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, associate professor of medicine at the University of Central Florida College of Medicine and a lecturer on cancer, coagulation and genetics.*



## ORLANDO HEALTH®

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## Cancer Institute

### Our Leadership Team

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## Supportive Services for Your Patients

In addition to offering the highest quality cancer care and access to the broadest possible array of treatments, Orlando Health Cancer Institute provides a variety of services that complement medical treatments. These include:

### Cancer Support Community and Integrative Medicine

Open to any patient with cancer in Central Florida, as well as survivors and caregivers, the Cancer Support Community and Integrative Medicine at Orlando Health help improve physical, emotional and social health. Available services support quality of life throughout cancer treatment and recovery, and include acupuncture, meditation, music therapy, relaxation techniques, massage and soothing facials. [CancerSupportCommunity@OrlandoHealth.com](mailto:CancerSupportCommunity@OrlandoHealth.com)

### Cancer Genetic Counseling

The Cancer Genetics and High Risk Care Center helps patients and families learn about the potential risk for a hereditary form of cancer. Genetic testing can empower patients to make better-informed decisions about managing their health.

Contact us at [Cancer.Genetics@OrlandoHealth.com](mailto:Cancer.Genetics@OrlandoHealth.com),  
call (321) 841-4363 or visit  
[OrlandoHealth.com/Genetics](http://OrlandoHealth.com/Genetics).

### Nurse Navigators

Our nurse navigators are available to help guide patients throughout their cancer journey — from diagnosis to survivorship. They assist new patients in identifying potential barriers to care and help prevent delays in treatment. More than 10 nurse navigators, each specializing in a specific type of cancer, serve as resources for patients, families, physicians and the care team.

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

### Nutrition

Working with the medical team, our registered dietitians support patients before, during and after treatment with meal plans and supplement strategies. In addition to promoting healthy lifestyles, they also help educate patients on managing the side effects of treatment.

### Rehabilitation Services

Orlando Health Rehabilitation Services helps patients with disabilities related to cancer and its treatment achieve their maximum level of function and independence, and improve their quality of life. Through education and support, patients can learn to better manage their lives at home, work or leisure; assist caregivers; and manage pain.