



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Awards and Prestigious Appointments

CPRIT grantees receiving recognition for accelerating innovative cancer prevention strategies, treatments and cures in Fiscal Year 2023

For Fiscal Year 2023

1. On September 1, 2022, the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) announced the selection of Swathi Arur, Ph.D., professor and deputy chair of Genetics at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, as one of their 2022 Emerging Leaders in Health and Medicine Scholars. Dr. Arur is the first MD Anderson faculty member to be appointed to this prestigious group since its creation in 2016. The Emerging Leaders in Health and Medicine (ELHM) Program was started to increase the academy's engagement with exceptional, interdisciplinary early- to mid-career professionals in biomedical science, population health, health care, health policy and other related fields. Each year, NAM chooses up to 10 new ELHM Scholars to serve three-year terms, creating a network that encourages collaboration, innovation, participation in National Academies convening activities, leadership opportunities and mentoring by NAM members across disciplines. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center received a \$900,000 CPRIT Individual Investigator grant (RP160023) in 2015.

2. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center has been selected as one of 12 National Institutes of Health Nutrition Obesity Research Centers in the U.S. and is the only institution in Texas on the list. Their mission is to investigate the causes, prevention, and treatment options for obesity, which UT Southwestern describes as a chronic disease affecting more than 40% of the U.S. population, with medical costs nearing \$175 billion. "Ultimately, our goal is to enhance the innovative nutrition and obesity research these investigators are currently engaged in and facilitate the translation of basic scientific discoveries into new therapeutic strategies for the prevention and treatment of obesity and the metabolic syndrome," said Philipp Scherer, Ph.D., professor, Department of Internal Medicine and Cell Biology at UT Southwestern, director of the Touchstone Diabetes Center, and associate director of the Nutrition Obesity Research Center. UT Southwestern has more than 150 scientists spanning dozens of departments in fields ranging from metabolism to genetics that will be part of the elite NIH-funded, university-wide interdisciplinary research center. UT Southwestern received a \$900,000 CPRIT Individual Investigator grant (RP140412) in August 2014.

3. On October 11, 2022, the *Healthcare Technology Report* named executives from two Austin-based CPRIT companies to its list of the "Top 25 Healthcare Technology Leaders of Austin for 2022." Jason Kim is President and Chief Operating Officer of Molecular Templates, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of the next generation of immunotoxins called engineered toxin bodies (ETBs). CPRIT awarded Molecular Templates two product development awards totaling \$25.8 million in 2012 and 2016 (CC121020, DP160071) for to develop ETBs. Boris Fischer is Vice President, Business Process and Systems, for Apollo Endosurgery, Inc., a medical technology company in Austin focused on developing next-generation, less invasive devices to advance therapeutic endoscopy to treat a variety of gastrointestinal conditions. CPRIT awarded Apollo one of its first Product Development awards in 2010 (RP101216) to develop medical devices to treat cancerous lesions in the gastrointestinal tract.

4. Leveraging support from the initial \$5.8 million Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer (TREC) grant that CPRIT awarded to The University of Texas at El Paso in 2021 (RP210153), Taslim Al-Hilal, Ph.D., received three grants totaling \$3.8 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in early October 2022 to advance his research to reduce mortality rates in lung, ovarian, and pancreatic cancer. The National Institute of General Medical Sciences awarded Dr. Al-Hilal, an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at UTEP, \$1.5 million to test the use of blood thinning agents to improve the efficacy of cancer immunotherapy in pancreatic cancer, where there is a high risk for the formation of blood clots within the tumor that impede blood circulation and the effectiveness of cancer therapies. Dr. Al-Hilal also received two grants from the National Cancer Institute, including \$1.8 million to study how scientists can target the prion-like Doppel protein commonly found in male reproductive glands to treat lung cancer. In previous studies, Dr. Al-Hilal and his collaborators observed that the Doppel protein is responsible for the formation of new blood vessels in lung tumors supporting growth of the tumors and facilitating their survival against attacks from the body's immune system. He received a second NCI award of \$400,000 to continue his research evaluating the Doppel protein as a new predictive biomarker for the early detection and diagnosis of ovarian cancer using a simple blood test, with a focus on the Latina population. CPRIT's TREC award is a multicomponent award designed to strengthen cancer research through supporting program leadership, investigator-initiated research projects, recruitment of new junior faculty, and research infrastructure at institutions located in regions of Texas that have historically received low levels of peer-reviewed cancer research funding.

5. On October 17, 2022, the National Academy of Medicine announced the election of Lora Hooper, Ph.D., chair, Department of Immunology, and Zhijian "James" Chen, Ph.D., professor, Department of Molecular Biology and director of the Center for Inflammation Research at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. New members are elected by current members through a process that recognizes individuals who have made major contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care, and public health. Dr. Hooper's studies in germ-free mice have led to the discovery of several secreted antimicrobial proteins that kill bacteria, which attach to the intestinal surface. Dr. Chen's research into complex cellular biochemistry has led to the discovery of pathways and proteins that trigger immune and stress responses. ImmuneSensor Therapeutics Inc., a Dallas-based clinical stage biotechnology company founded on Dr. Chen's CPRIT-funded research, is developing a new class of drug called STING agonists that target this cellular pathway to activate the

patient's immune system to fight cancers. CPRIT awarded the company a \$16 million product development grant in September (DP220030). With their election, UT Southwestern now has 18 members of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), along with 24 members of the National Academy of Sciences, placing the institution among the nation's elite academic medical centers. Dr. Hooper is the PI on one CPRIT Academic Research Award for \$200,000 (RP130166), and Dr. Chen is the PI on five CPRIT Academic grants since 2010, totaling \$11 million (RP180725, RP150498, RP120718-C2, RP120718-P3, RP110430).

6. *Popular Science* magazine chooses an annual list to honor early-career scientists and engineers known as the Brilliant 10. This is a recognition of what the honorees have already accomplished as well as a forecast of future endeavors. In October 2022, CPRIT Scholar Sangeetha Reddy, M.D., assistant professor, Department of Internal Medicine at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, was elected as one of The Brilliant 10. As a physician-scientist, she uses an approach that she describes as "bedside to bench and back." She treats patients in her clinic, conducts *in vitro* and mouse experiments in her lab, and designs and manages her own clinical trials. Dr. Reddy is currently testing three drugs to combat triple-negative breast cancer and these three drugs have kept breast cancer tumors in mice at least 50% smaller than chemotherapy alone. Earlier this year, Dr. Reddy began enrolling patients in a Phase-1 clinical trial investigating the safety and efficacy of the regimen. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Reddy in February 2019 from The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR190020).

7. Gadeta B.V., an innovative clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company pioneering the development of gamma delta ($\gamma\delta$) T-cell receptor (TCR)-based immunotherapies for solid tumors, announced on October 20, 2022, the formation of a Scientific Advisory Board comprised of internationally renowned leaders in oncology, T cell biology and strategic drug development. CPRIT Scholar Cassian Yee, M.D., professor, Departments of Melanoma Medical Oncology and Immunology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, was one of the five scientists appointed to the new board. The Yee Lab is developing adoptive cellular therapy as a treatment modality for patients with malignant and viral diseases. Dr Yee holds more than 15 worldwide patents on *ex vivo* generation of antigen specific T cells, memory reprogramming and antigen discovery to establish immunotherapy-based cancer treatments on a global scale. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Yee from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, University of Washington, with the support of a \$3 million CPRIT Recruitment of Clinical Investigators grant (R1301) in December 2012.

8. In recognition of her trailblazing work uncovering the mechanisms of the p53 tumor suppressor, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) awarded Guillermina "Gigi" Lozano, Ph.D., chair of Genetics at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, the 2022 Award for Distinguished Research in the Biomedical Sciences on October 27, 2022. Since its inception in 1947, the AAMC Award for Distinguished Research in the Biomedical Sciences has annually honored an individual whose research contributes to significant scientific discoveries benefitting human health and well-being, who participate in research beyond their own work through mentorship or review panels, and whose standards of professional ethics and scientific integrity are of the highest caliber. Dr. Lozano is the second MD Anderson researcher selected for this award, with James Allison, Ph.D., honored in 2014. CPRIT awarded Dr. Lozano four research grants totaling \$3.4 million, three of which directly supported her work with p53 (RP100535, RP170231, RP180313, RP200240).

9. In November 2022, Ignite Healthcare Network's Accelerator Program, a Houston-based, female-focused health tech organization, hosted its seven women-led digital health startup finalists at its annual Fire Pitch Competition. The nonprofit is led by a group of women executives committed to shaping the future of health care. Joanna Nathan, CEO of Houston-based Prana Thoracic, won the top award for her company. Joanna Nathan is an investor turned entrepreneur on a mission to improve outcomes for lung cancer patients as the CEO of Prana Thoracic. Prana's technology is the first minimally invasive medical device to enable early diagnosis and intervention in lung cancer. Prana Thoracic, Inc. received a \$3 million CPRIT Seed Awards for Product Development Research grant (DP220054) in August 2022 to fund the commercialization of Prana Thoracic's technology through first-in-human studies.

10. The James P. Allison Institute at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center announced on October 21, 2022, the establishment of its Internal Advisory Council to provide scientific input and to align the work of the institute with the broader MD Anderson research enterprise. The advisory council is led by Allison Institute Director of Science Operations and Management CPRIT Scholar Raghu Kalluri, M.D., Ph.D., chair of Cancer Biology, and Karen Lu, M.D., chair of Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine. Launched in March, the Allison Institute was created to drive exceptional discovery, translational, and clinical research that will integrate immunobiology across disciplines. The institute is led by CPRIT Scholar James P. Allison, Ph.D., chair of Immunology, together with Kalluri, and Director of Scientific Programs Padmanee Sharma, M.D., Ph.D., professor of Genitourinary Medical Oncology and Immunology. The University of Texas

MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Allison with the support of a \$10 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1203) in November 2011; and recruited Dr. Kalluri with the support of a \$3.5 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1227) in August 2012.

11. Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, MPH, professor, director of the Institute for Health Promotion Research, chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, is an internationally recognized health disparities researcher. Talk show host Oprah Winfrey selected Dr. Ramirez as a “Cycle Breaker” for her innovating work in building health equity in the Latino community locally and nationally. Cycle Breakers is a video series from the Smithsonian Channel that spotlights leaders who are solving health disparities in marginalized communities. Oprah chose each Cycle Breaker to augment her documentary, *The Color of Care*, which chronicles how people of color suffer from systemically substandard US healthcare and the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the devastating consequences of this inequity. Dr. Ramirez’s episode, which features her mission to break the cycles of inequities in healthcare for Latinos, was released on Oct. 3, 2022. “The work that you’re doing to make real change and help correct disparities in our healthcare system is invaluable,” Oprah said. “I hope you feel empowered now to continue on your path to helping communities take the right step, the right next step, to begin to make a difference.” In addition to her many efforts over the last 30 years, Dr. Ramirez directs Quitxt, a bilingual tobacco-cessation service for young Latino adults using mobile-phone text messages, funded by CPRIT. The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio has received three CPRIT Prevention grants (PP140176, PP170099, PP180092) for a total of \$4 million to support this health disparities research with Dr. Ramirez as PI.

12. Rice University bioengineers, synthetic biologists, and others gathered to celebrate the opening of the Genetic Design and Engineering Center (GDEC) at Rice’s BioScience Research Collaborative on November 10, 2022. The GDEC is the first CPRIT Core Facility at Rice and will allow Rice University and the Texas Medical Center researchers to collaborate on the design, assembly, and testing of custom DNA constructs for the study and treatment of cancer. The GDEC has state-of-the-art equipment for making and validating “DNA constructs,” synthetic strands of genetic code that can reprogram cells for the development of cancer vaccines, cell and gene therapies, immunotherapies, and research into cancer genetics, cell biology, and more. CPRIT Scholar Gang Bao, Ph.D., professor and chair of Bioengineering, GDEC Director, and principal investigator on the CPRIT grant, reported that the GDEC has already initiated collaborations with Baylor College of Medicine, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and Houston Methodist Academic Institute. The GDEC is designed to make it easy for researchers to draw on Rice’s expertise in synthetic biology and bioengineering and to utilize GDEC’s state-of-the-art equipment, including robotic liquid handlers and DNA sequencers that will accelerate discovery. Rice University received a \$4 million CPRIT Core Facility Support Awards grant (RP210116) in August 2021 to build the Genetic Design and Engineering Center.

13. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston President, Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, M.D., awarded the 2021 President’s Scholar Awards for Excellence in Research to Maria E. Fernández, Ph.D., Vice President of Population Health & Implementation Science, during a ceremony on November 9, 2022. The nominations come from peers and each award carries with it the honorary title of President’s Scholar. Dr. Fernández is also a professor in the Department of Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences and the director of the Center for Health Promotion & Prevention Research. She has contributed significantly to the field of cancer prevention and control, especially in underserved communities, and is renowned for her scientific leadership and mentorship of junior investigators. CPRIT has awarded UT Health Houston and Dr. Fernández four CPRIT academic research grants (RP100865, RP130459, RP170493, RP210042) and four prevention grants (PP100077, PP230086, PP130075, PP160051) totaling \$12.7 million.

14. The Sontag Foundation, which invests in scientists who are committed to advancing scientific discoveries and treatment breakthroughs in the field of brain cancer, awarded CPRIT Scholar, Kevin McHugh, Ph.D., the Distinguished Science Award for 2022 in November 2022. Dr. McHugh, who was recruited to Rice University in 2019, is developing strategies that employ gene editing to defeat glioblastoma multiforme, a highly aggressive brain cancer. His Rice lab customizes CRISPR components to target tumor cells that harbor mutations unique to cancer. Delivering gene therapy agents directly to a tumor would induce the production of a toxic protein and subsequent cell death exclusively in glioblastoma multiforme cells throughout the brain. Rice University recruited Dr. McHugh from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with the support of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR190056).

15. ReCode Therapeutics, a genetic medicines company using superior delivery to power the next wave of mRNA and gene correction therapeutics, announced on November 14, 2022, the formation of the company’s Scientific Advisory Board. CPRIT Scholar Daniel J. Siegwart, Ph.D., was appointed chair, and among its inaugural members is Eric Olson, Ph.D., principal investigator of a CPRIT Academic Research grant (RP200103). ReCode’s SORT LNP platform, developed by Dr. Siegwart and his lab, was described by *Nature* as one of the

"Seven Technologies to Watch in 2022." Dr. Olson's most recent work has provided a new strategy for correction of Duchenne muscular dystrophy-causing mutations using CRISPR gene editing. These advisors will work closely with management to support the company's expansion of its selective organ targeting (SORT) lipid nanoparticle (LNP) platform capabilities and advance its pipeline. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Siegwart from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with the support of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (R1212) in August 2012.

16. More than 20 scientists from The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center are among the 2022 Highly Cited Researchers listed in the top 1% of researchers from across the globe who have demonstrated significant and broad influence in their chosen field or fields of research. The list was announced on November 17, 2022, by the Institute for Scientific Information at Clarivate. Less than 1% of the nearly 8 million researchers in the world over the last decade have published multiple papers frequently cited by their peers that rank in the top 1% of citations for their field and a year. Ten of these UTSW scientists are CPRIT grantees, including multiple-time CPRIT Primary Investigator grantees: Zhijian J. Chen (RP110430, RP120718-P3, RP120718-C2, RP150498, RP180725) totaling more than \$11 million; Ralph J. DeBerardinis, (RP100437, RP130272, RP140021-P3, RP160089) totaling \$2.2 million; John Minna, (RP101251-P5, RP110708-P1, RP120732-P1, RP140672) totaling \$6.33 million; CPRIT Scholar Sean Morrison (R1109, RP170114, RP170633, RP180778, RP220492) totaling \$176 million; Eric Olson (RP110486-P2, RP200103) totaling \$2.6 million; Amit Singal (PP160075, RP200554) totaling \$4 million; Madhukar Trivedi, (PP160121, RP210148) totaling \$1.6 million.

"The Highly Cited Researchers list identifies and celebrates exceptional individual researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center who are having a significant impact on the research community as evidenced by the rate at which their work is being cited by their peers. These individuals are helping to transform human ingenuity into our world's greatest breakthroughs – and it is an honor to celebrate their achievements," said David Pendlebury, Head of Research Analysis at the Institute for Scientific Information at Clarivate.

17. At an Around the Practice® program hosted by CancerNetwork®, experts spoke about the current treatment paradigms in urothelial carcinoma. CPRIT Scholar Tian Zhang, M.D., MHS, associate professor, Department of Internal Medicine at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, was chosen as one of four panelists. This discussion focused on clinical scenarios of urothelial carcinoma and expert oncologists reviewed recent data and discussed how patient care is evolving. Dr. Zhang provided the guideline-approved therapies for metastatic or advanced urothelial cancer. She explained that many of the first-line treatments for metastatic urothelial cancer are still based on chemotherapy. In the second line, they use immunotherapy regimens—mostly PD-1 or PD-L1 inhibitors. "Overall, we've come a long way in the past 5 to 7 years in the treatment of metastatic urothelial cancer, and guidelines keep evolving," Dr. Zhang said. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Zhang with a \$4 million Recruitment of Rising Stars grant (RR210079) in August 2018.

18. A Conversation With a Living Legend® San Antonio honored Nobel Laureate and CPRIT Scholar James P. Allison, Ph.D., Vice President of Immunobiology and Chair of Immunology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center on November 17, 2022. MD Anderson's signature A Conversation With a Living Legend® event brought together more than 300 people to honor Dr. Allison and to raise funds for the James P. Allison Institute, a visionary research and innovation hub created to conduct groundbreaking science that integrates immunobiology across all disciplines and unlocks the full potential of science and medicine for human health. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Allison from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center with the support of a \$10 million Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1203) in November 2011.

19. The Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) announced in November 2022 that two renowned Rice University professors won prestigious honors for exceptional achievements and outstanding contributions that have made a lasting impact on technology, society and the engineering profession. IEEE is the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity. Lydia Kavradi, Ph.D., professor, Departments of Computer Science, of Bioengineering, and of Mechanical Engineering, received the IEEE Frances E. Allen Medal "for foundational probabilistic algorithms and randomized search methods that have broad impact in robotic motion planning and computational biology." Rebecca Richards-Kortum, Ph.D., professor, Department of Bioengineering, and Director of Rice 360° Institute for Global Health, won the IEEE Medal for Innovations in Healthcare Technology "for contributions to optical solutions for cancer detection and leadership in establishing the field of global health engineering." CPRIT has funded Dr. Kavradi's research at Rice University with a \$900,000 Individual Investigator Research Award (RP170508). CPRIT has funded Dr. Richards-Kortum's research at Rice University with two Individual Investigator Research Awards (RP100932, RP160460) totaling \$2.7 million.

20. CPRIT Scholar Christopher Flowers, M.D., division head ad interim of Cancer Medicine and chair of Lymphoma & Myeloma at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, received a 2022 ASH Mentor Award from the American Society of Hematology in December 2022. The ASH Mentor Award recognizes outstanding mentors in the hematology community who have guided, supported, and promoted the training and career development of others. Each year, ASH recognizes two outstanding mentors from any branch of hematology as part of their Honorific Awards. Dr. Flowers is a globally recognized leader in lymphoma clinical and population science research as well as a national leader in hematology and medical oncology. He has made significant contributions to the field, including revealing racial disparities in lymphoid cancers and supporting the successful development of the first PI3-kinase inhibitor and CD79b-direct therapy in oncology. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Flowers with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR190079) in May 2019.

21. On January 11, 2023, The University of Texas at Dallas announced that A. Dean Sherry, Ph.D., a distinguished scientist and educator who retired in 2022 after 50 years on the faculty of UT Dallas, was named a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI). Dr. Sherry's career as an inventor began in 1972 when he arrived on the UT Dallas campus after a National Institutes of Health (NIH) postdoctoral fellowship at New Mexico State University. He was just the fourth faculty member in UTD's Chemistry Department and established himself as a trailblazer in designing molecules called macrocyclic chelates for use in medical imaging and therapy. Dr. Sherry founded a company in the mid-1990s called Macrocyclics, based on his pioneering synthesis and coordination chemistry, to produce specialized chemical compounds for the pharmaceutical industry and academic researchers. The company started in a small UTD lab with just a few products and has since grown to a global supplier of molecules that have advanced diagnostics and therapies for cancer and other diseases. Dr. Sherry is an inventor on 34 patents and has received numerous honors for his contributions to science, including being named fellow of the World Molecular Imaging Society and of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine. His research over the past 50 years has been supported by the NIH, The Welch Foundation, the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (RP180178, RP140021-AC, RP101243-C1), and other public and private sources.

22. CPRIT Scholar Erez Lieberman Aiden, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Molecular and Human Genetics, Baylor College of Medicine, received the 2023 Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in Physical Sciences from the Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science & Technology (TAMEST) on May 23, 2023. The Edith and Peter O'Donnell Awards annually recognize rising Texas researchers who are addressing the essential role that science and technology play in society, and whose work meets the highest standards of exemplary professional performance, creativity, and resourcefulness. He was chosen for dramatically impacting the understanding of genomic 3D structures and the role and processes of the human genome. Dr. Aiden's research combines the development of new molecular technologies, high-throughput DNA sequencing and powerful computational and biophysical methods. Baylor College of Medicine recruited Dr. Aiden from the Harvard Medical School in December 2012 with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (R1304).

23. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center physician-scientist Hesham Sadek, M.D., Ph.D., received the prestigious National Institutes of Health (NIH) Outstanding Investigator Award in January 2023 to support his ongoing research into mechanisms behind heart regeneration. The award promotes productivity and innovation by scientists whose outstanding record of research demonstrates their ability to make major contributions to heart research. It provides investigators like Dr. Sadek with increased freedom to conduct research that breaks new ground and allows them to take greater risks and pursue research that requires a longer time frame. "There are currently no therapies that can reverse heart failure or induce heart regeneration in humans," said Dr. Sadek, professor of Internal Medicine, Biophysics, and Molecular Biology, who serves as the associate director of the Hamon Center for Regenerative Science and Medicine at UTSW. Dr. Sadek has been the principal investigator in two CPRIT Individual Investigator grants (RP190435, RP160520) in 2019 and 2015 for a total of \$1.8 million.

24. CPRIT Scholar Cullen Taniguchi, M.D, Ph.D., and Stephen Lai, M.D., Ph.D., from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center were named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for their notable contributions to the field of cancer research in January 2023. In a tradition that began in 1874, each AAAS Fellow is elected by their peers to recognize invaluable contributions to science and technology. Dr. Taniguchi, associate professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, was selected for impactful research that revealed the role of HIF2 in hypoxia-mediated cellular communication within tumors and normal tissues, leading to translational breakthroughs in regenerative medicine and cancer biology. His findings on hypoxia signaling helped build an independent radiation biology and cancer laboratory at MD Anderson, which has earned several prestigious grants. Dr. Lai, professor, Department of Head and Neck Surgery, was selected for developing novel therapies and imaging technologies from bench to bedside that have improved treatments

for solid tumors. Dr. Lai pioneered the use of multiparametric magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to predict treatment effects to maximize anti-tumor activity and minimize treatment side effects, including first-in-human hyperpolarized MRI studies for head and neck cancer patients. Both Dr. Taniguchi and Dr. Lai have been principal investigators in CPRIT grants to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (RP170366, DP220043) totaling \$3.9 million. Dr. Taniguchi was recruited from Stanford University with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR140012) in 2014.

25. BerGenBio ASA (Norway), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company developing novel, selective AXL kinase inhibitors for severe unmet medical needs, announced on February 2, 2023, the formation of a scientific advisory board consisting of four world-renowned non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) experts from top oncology centers around the globe to enhance the development of bemcentinib for the treatment of NSCLC patients with STK11 mutations (STK11m). John Heymach, M.D., Ph.D., Chair of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, is one of the four advisory board members chosen. Dr. Heymach is a co-leader of the MD Anderson Lung Cancer Moon Shots program. The Company has initiated a global Phase 1a/2b trial to assess bemcentinib with standard of care in 1st line NSCLC patients with STK11m. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center received a \$756,148 CPRIT Individual Investigator grant (RP200150) in February 2020 to identify novel compounds to enhance the anti-tumor activity and reduce adverse effects for patients with non-small cell lung cancer.

26. Courtney DiNardo, M.D., associate professor, Department of Leukemia at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, was elected as a member of The American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) in January 2023. Dr. DiNardo is the principal investigator for a CPRIT Individual Investigator Research Awards for Clinical Translation grant (RP220299) awarded in 2022. Dr. DiNardo's clinical and research focus pertaining to hereditary cancer predisposition syndromes has led to the development of the MD Anderson Hereditary Hematologic Malignancy Clinic, which now provides clinical and research-based evaluation of underlying cancer predispositions and hereditary cancer syndromes in leukemia patients. The ASCI is dedicated to the advancement of research that extends understanding of diseases and improves treatment, and members are committed to mentoring future generations of physician-scientists.

27. Anirban Maitra, MBBS, professor, Department of Pathology and Translational Molecular Pathology, and scientific director of the Sheikh Ahmed Pancreatic Cancer Research Center at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, was elected as a member of The American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) in January 2023. Dr. Maitra is the principal investigator in a CPRIT High Impact/High Risk grant (RP220610) awarded in 2022. Dr. Maitra is committed to identifying and implementing translational research opportunities in pancreatic cancer that can improve the survival of patients with this disease, with a particular focus on early detection and cancer interception. The ASCI is dedicated to the advancement of research that extends understanding of diseases and improves treatment, and members are committed to mentoring future generations of physician-scientists.

28. CPRIT Scholar Michael Taylor, M.D., Ph.D., was appointed the director of the Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Research Program at Texas Children's Hospital and at Baylor College of Medicine in February 2023. Dr. Taylor will lead a team of investigators dedicated to pursuing novel therapies for particularly difficult-to-treat pediatric brain tumors, including medulloblastoma and ependymoma. Previously, Dr. Taylor was a professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto and a principal investigator in the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Brain Tumour Research Centre at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. "While I am dedicated to curing medulloblastoma and ependymoma, most of all, I look forward to continuing my research into preventing these aggressive cancers. My vision is that no family ever has to face this devastating diagnosis," said Dr. Taylor. Dr. Taylor was recruited by Baylor College of Medicine in May 2022 with the support of a CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR220051).

29. On February 9, 2023, the Research Corporation for Science Advancement (RCSA) named CPRIT Scholar Julian West, Ph.D., as a 2023 Cottrell Scholar. Only 25 of the prestigious early-career awards are given each year. The highly selective program accepts proposals from chemists, physicists and astronomers from U.S. and Canadian research universities. Awardees receive \$100,000, are invited to an annual Cottrell Scholar conference and are also eligible to compete for future funding through the Cottrell Plus Awards program. In 2020, he was named to Forbes' 30 Under 30, an annual listing of top entrepreneurs, innovators and game-changers. Dr. West was recruited to Rice University with a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR190025) in 2019.

30. Factors such as the patient's socioeconomic status or their location may limit access to early-phase cancer clinical trials, creating a barrier of entry for diverse and medically underserved populations who are frequently not enrolled onto early-phase studies. To expand access to cancer care and research, Stand Up To Cancer® (SU2C) launched a four-team initiative across the United States to address cancer disparities and facilitate development of new treatments with the potential to benefit patients and may be replicable across other institutions. On February 8, 2023,

CPRIT grantee David Gerber, M.D., and Chika Nwachukwu, M.D., Ph.D., received one of the four SU2C grants to translate their efforts in “transferring care” to enhance access to early-phase cancer clinical trials at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center in Dallas. Using their existing platform of “sharing care” for patients with cancer between Parkland Health, a safety-net system serving underrepresented minorities, and the UT Southwestern Medical Center, the investigators will tackle trial availability, one of three main areas affecting access to clinical trials. The investigators will leverage existing support systems already in place at Parkland, including bilingual clinical research navigators that help patients through the Parkland system and patient navigators to assist with care coordination, to provide psychosocial support, and to address logistical barriers to ensure the broadest benefit to diverse populations. Dr. Gerber is a professor of internal medicine, co-director of the Experimental Therapeutics Program at UT Southwestern Medical Center, Simmons Cancer Center, and principal investigator of a CPRIT Clinical Trials Network Award to expand access to clinical trials (RP220542), and several CPRIT-funded clinical trials (RP160030, RP210115) totaling \$6 million.

31. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center announced February 22, 2023, that CPRIT-grantee Jennifer Wargo, M.D., professor, Department of Surgical Oncology and Genomic Medicine at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, is the recipient of the 2023 Sergio Lombroso International Award in Cancer Research from the Weizmann Institute of Science. The objectives of the program are to promote cancer research and scientific collaboration between Italy and Israel. The International Award is dedicated to a distinguished scientist in cancer research in the international arena who has made highly significant contributions to the understanding of the causes and mechanisms of cancer, or to its diagnostics and therapy. Dr. Wargo has been the principal investigator in two CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP200574, RP150030) awarded to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center totaling \$1.15 million.

32. Amelie Ramirez, DrPH, MPH, was inducted to the San Antonio Women’s Hall of Fame “Health” category on March 4, 2023. Since 1984, the San Antonio Women’s Hall of Fame has annually inducted women from Bexar County and surrounding counties who have shaped the future of San Antonio and paved the way for women in Texas business, service, education, and more. Dr. Ramirez is professor and chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences, and currently directs the Salud America! national multimedia program, conducts breast cancer disparities research on quality of life and survivorship issues, and directs Quitxt, a bilingual tobacco-cessation service for young Latino adults using mobile-phone text messages, funded by CPRIT. In 2022, TV personality Oprah Winfrey selected Ramirez as a “Cycle Breaker” for her groundbreaking work to build health equity in the Latino community. The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio received three CPRIT Prevention grants (PP180092, PP170099, PP140176) in 2018, 2017, and 2014 totaling \$4 million to promote Dr. Ramirez’ work to increase accessibility and utilization of evidence-based smoking cessation services among underserved young adults in Texas.

33. On March 7, 2023, CommUnityCare Health Centers, in conjunction with Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin, received the 2023 Grand Prize for the *80% in Every Community National Achievement Award*. The honor singles out individuals and organizations for dedicating their time, talent, and expertise to advance colorectal cancer screening rates to 80% or higher across the United States in an equitable manner. During its first year alone, the CommUnityCare program doubled the percentage of patients screened for colorectal cancer from 18.4% to 37%. The award is given by the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, founded by the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The initiative has been made possible by multiple CPRIT grants. “Our partnership with CommUnityCare has helped numerous patients get screened and has been implemented in a way that improves health care equity,” said Michael Pignone, M.D., MPH, Chair of Dell Med’s Department of Internal Medicine and Program Leader for the CPRIT awards. The University of Texas at Austin received 3 CPRIT Prevention grants (PP170082, PP200066, PP210045) in 2017, 2020, and 2021 totaling \$4.6 million to support Dr. Pignone’s effort to increase CRC screening rates and reduce health disparities.

34. On March 14, 2023, the Third Annual Healthcare Digital Marketing Awards recognized The Rose for their outstanding digital marketing efforts to empower women to take control of their breast health. The Rose, a recipient of multiple CPRIT Prevention awards and the leading nonprofit breast health care organization in southeast Texas, received a Gold Award for the character “Mona the Mammo Queen” and a Silver Award for The Rose’s educational video “Let’s Talk about Your Breasts.” Their “Mona the Mammo Queen” campaign is a creative and engaging way to encourage women to get their mammograms. The Rose developed the character of Mona to speak to younger women, especially those turning 40 and help them feel comfortable about the screening process. The campaign was highly successful in increasing mammogram appointments and encouraging women to take control of their breast health. The Rose’s video, “Let’s Talk about Your Breasts,” is a powerful and uplifting resource that focuses on partnering with the community to raise awareness about breast health in a positive and inclusive way, across cultures where conversations about the body and health are often silenced. CPRIT has awarded The Rose eight CPRIT Prevention grants since 2010 (PP100096, PP110154, PP120040, PP140171, PP150080, PP170091, PP190043, PP220015) totaling nearly \$12 million.

35. Konstantin Sokolov, Ph.D., professor, Department of Imaging Physics at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, was elected to the 2023 class of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) College of Fellows on March 27, 2023. Election to the AIMBE College of Fellows is among the highest professional distinctions accorded to a medical and biological engineer. The College of Fellows is comprised of the top 2% of medical and biological engineers. Dr. Sokolov has been the Principal Investigator for two CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP170314, RP200223) in 2016 and 2020 totaling \$1.8 million with the aim to develop a combination of optimized new agents and methods for NK cell imaging with high sensitivity that are primed for clinical translation.

36. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston appointed Maria E. Fernández, Ph.D., vice president of Population Health and Implementation Science on March 3, 2023. Dr. Fernández, the Lorne Bain Distinguished Professor of Public Health and Medicine, director of the Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Research at UTHealth Houston School of Public Health and founding co-director of the UTHealth Houston Institute for Implementation Science, will lead the university's efforts in population health sciences including the integration of innovations and discoveries into real-world settings. "Despite all the advances in health innovations, there is still a substantial research-to-practice gap across all health science disciplines, from public health to nursing," Dr. Fernández said. "Implementation science, as a field, has the potential to bridge this gap and to improve health, health equity, and quality of life." CPRIT has awarded UT Health Houston and Dr. Fernández four CPRIT academic research grants (RP100865, RP130459, RP170493, RP210042) and four prevention grants (PP100077, PP230086, PP130075, PP160051) totaling \$12.7 million.

37. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center announced the establishment of the Beth Levine, M.D. Prize in Autophagy Research in March 2023, to commemorate a researcher who kept the institution at the forefront of her field. The award honors Dr. Beth Levine who died of breast cancer in 2020. Dr. Levine "has left a legacy through her fundamental discoveries as well as her trainees who were steeped in science through her mentorship," said Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., President of UT Southwestern. "This prize honors her work and career that led to novel insights into the molecular mechanisms underlying autophagy and their broad implications for basic cellular biology and many prevalent diseases." Distributions from the endowment will support an annual award and lecture. Dr. Levine was the PI of a \$1.57 million CPRIT Academic Research grant (RP120718-P1) in August 2012.

38. CPRIT Scholar Andy Futreal, Ph.D., Chair of Genomic Medicine, and Helen Piwnica-Worms, Ph.D., professor of Experimental Radiation Oncology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, were elected to the 2023 class of Fellows of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Academy in April 2023. Dr. Futreal was elected for his pioneering use of large-scale genomics to understand cancer pathogenesis and to identify novel human cancer genes. His breakthrough discovery of BRAF mutations in human melanoma led to the development of the first effective targeted therapy for advanced melanoma, thus inspiring a global effort in cancer genomics. Dr. Piwnica-Worms is recognized for her breakthrough contributions to understanding the biochemical mechanisms of cell cycle regulation and for determining how perturbations in cell cycle control mechanisms contribute to cancer onset. Her elucidation of CHK1, CDC25 and 14-3-3 interactions provided the first direct link between cell cycle checkpoints and mitotic control. This work has been essential to the understanding of breast cancer development and progression. Drs. Futreal and Piwnica-Worms join several previously elected fellows from MD Anderson, including CPRIT Scholars James Allison, Ph.D., Neal Copeland, Ph.D., Nancy Jenkins, Ph.D.; CPRIT grantees Guillermina (Gigi) Lozano, Ph.D., and Ronald DePinho, M.D.; and former CPRIT Chief Scientific Officer Margaret Kripke, Ph.D. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Futreal in November 2011 with a \$7 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1205). Dr. Piwnica-Worms has been the principal investigator for three CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP150148, RP200120, RP220567) totaling \$2 million.

39. The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) announced its newest class of grant recipients on April 12, 2023. Since 1993, the AACR has allocated \$133 million and awarded 880 research grants to support hundreds of scientists devoted to advancing the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. CPRIT Scholar Valentina Hoyos Velez, M.D., assistant professor, Center for Cell and Gene Therapy at Baylor College of Medicine, was awarded the 2022 Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers Career Development Award, in Partnership with Pelotonia & AACR, for her research "Chimeric Antigen-Receptor T Cell Therapy Against a Novel Target for the Treatment of Triple Negative Breast Cancer." Baylor College of Medicine recruited Dr. Velez in 2017 from Johns Hopkins University with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR170024).

40. On April 13, 2023, the American Cancer Society presented the prestigious Clinical Research Professor Award to Michael Pignone, M.D., MPH., in support of his ongoing work in cancer prevention and control at Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin. The award will also allow Dr. Pignone, a professor and chair in the Department of Internal Medicine, to develop a cancer control fellowship and career mentorship program, training more junior researchers. With this award, ACS recognizes Dr. Pignone's national impact in improving

cancer screening and prevention, including success in partnering with community organizations to reduce disparities among underserved communities in Central Texas. This research will investigate cost-effectiveness to inform resource allocation for cancer screening programs to reduce disparities. Dr. Pignone will also develop a cancer control fellowship training and career mentorship program to grow a diverse workforce of cancer screening and prevention-focused researchers. Dr. Pignone has been the principal investigator in five CPRIT-funded projects since 2017 totaling \$6.6 million and aimed at cancer prevention and control in Central Texas (PP210045, PP200066, PP200036, PP190063, PP170082).

41. In April 2023, Lydia Kavraki, Ph.D., professor, Departments of Computer Science, Bioengineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering at Rice University, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the nation's foremost society of scholars. Dr. Kavraki is among nearly 270 members to be inducted into the academy this year, joining a tradition of honoring excellence and leadership across disciplines and practices. In the biomedical field, her efforts focus on the development of computational tools for modeling biomolecular structure and function, informing immunotherapy and drug discovery. Her research in computational robotics seeks to enable robots to work with people and in support of people in real-world contexts such as hospitals and homes. Dr. Kavraki's research has earned funding from the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (RP170508), and NASA.

42. The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) announced on May 1, 2023, the recipients of the 2023 Intersect Fellowships for Computational Scientists and Immunologists, including CPRIT Scholar Mauro Di Pilato, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Immunology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. This fellowship provides independent research scientists with one year of salary support for postdoctoral fellows trained in basic bench research to undertake one year of training in computational science. Dr. Di Pilato and Ziyi Li, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Biostatistics at MD Anderson, will provide mentorship to trainee Fernanda Grande Kugeratski, Ph.D. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Di Pilato with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR210017) in November 2020.

43. The American Society for Investigative Pathology announced on May 1, 2023, that CPRIT Scholar Qing Zhang, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Pathology and Co-Director of the Kidney Cancer Career Enhancement Program at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, is the 2024 recipient of the ASIP Outstanding Investigator Award. The ASIP Outstanding Investigator Award recognizes mid-career investigators with demonstrated excellence in experimental pathology research, including impactful achievements related to research, teaching, mentorship, leadership in the field of pathology, and contributions to the Society. Dr. Zhang and his group at UT Southwestern are studying a fundamental question in the cancer field – how do cancer cells sense low oxygen tension, adapt to this stressful environment, and proliferate out of control? To address these broad but critical questions, Dr. Zhang has pioneered unbiased genome and proteome-wide approaches to identify new signaling molecules in oxygen sensing signaling pathways, which have yielded new therapeutic targets in cancer. Dr. Zhang's nominators described his outstanding contributions to teaching in the classroom, mentoring students and postdoctoral fellows in the laboratory, and his service to UTSW and to the field at-large, as well as his strong and productive research program. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Zhang in May 2019 with the support of a \$4 million CPRIT Recruitment of Rising Stars grant (RR190058).

44. Two researchers from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center were elected to the prestigious National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in May 2023. Helen Piwnica-Worms, Ph.D., professor of Experimental Radiation Oncology, and Richard Wood, Ph.D., professor of Epigenetics and Molecular Carcinogenesis and chair of Carcinogenesis, are recognized for their respective contributions to advancing understanding of cancer genetics, biochemistry, and cell biology.

Dr. Piwnica-Worms discovered the biochemical mechanism that activates or deactivates CDK1, a key regulator of mitosis during the cell cycle and how cell cycle checkpoints prevent CDK1 activation. This was the first direct link demonstrated between cell cycle checkpoints and mitotic control. Her work has been essential to the understanding of breast cancer development and progression, and her discoveries have prompted clinical studies for agents targeting the cell cycle and checkpoint proteins in multiple cancer types. Dr. Piwnica-Worms is currently focused on identifying alterations driving triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) and therapeutic resistance mechanisms. This research has already demonstrated that chemotherapy resistance in TNBC can occur through adaptable and reversible pathways, and it pointed to new vulnerabilities in drug-tolerant cancer cells. Dr. Piwnica-Worms has been the principal investigator for three CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP150148, RP200120, RP220567) totaling \$2 million.

Dr. Wood has made foundational contributions to the biochemistry and genetics of DNA repair and cancer development, explaining how eukaryotic cells are protected from ultraviolet (UV) radiation damage. He established the first cell-free system for nucleotide excision repair (NER) in eukaryotes, allowing him to precisely define the NER mechanism and identify key enzymes in UV-induced damage repair. By reconstituting the entire NER pathway using 30 purified proteins, he made it possible for the first time to determine the role of each protein at each step. These experiments included the discovery of the roles of replication proteins during NER and defining sequential NER steps at the molecular level, including opening the double helix by a multi-protein complex. The work revealed the specific biochemical defects in *xeroderma pigmentosum*, an inherited disease conferring a greatly increased risk of skin cancer. Dr. Wood was also the first to isolate the XPG and ERCC1-XPF nucleases and discovered their action via structure-specific incision. This work helped found the field of DNA structure-selective enzymology, now studied in multiple areas of DNA biology. His recent work has yielded numerous discoveries that define the roles of various DNA polymerases in genome stability and cancer. Dr. Wood was the principal investigator in a \$450,000 CPRIT Individual Investigators grant (RP130297).

45. CPRIT Scholar Shrikanth Gadad, Ph.D., assistant professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso, received a \$792,000 grant on May 2, 2023, from the American Cancer Society to support his ongoing efforts with cancer research. Dr. Gadad's research focuses on understanding the shift from hormone-sensitive to hormone-resistant breast cancer. The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso recruited Dr. Gadad in 2017 with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR170020).

46. CPRIT Scholar Carlos Arteaga, M.D., professor, Department Internal Medicine, and associate dean of Oncology Programs at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and Jeffrey Rosen, Ph.D., professor, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology at Baylor College of Medicine, were both named research scholar for Susan G. Komen® in May 2023, who will help guide Komen's research and scientific programs with a focus on advancing discoveries to improve breast cancer outcomes. Dr. Arteaga is internationally recognized for his work in laboratory-based translational research and advancing the care of breast cancer patients. He has earned numerous accolades from the American Cancer Society, the American Association for Cancer Research, Susan G. Komen®, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Dr. Rosen's Lab has developed a series of extensively characterized and "credentialed" syngeneic models of triple negative breast cancer that are being used in preclinical studies to determine both tumor intrinsic and extrinsic effects on the tumor microenvironment of both targeted therapies. Dr. Rosen has been the principal investigator for five CPRIT Academic Research grants awarded to the Baylor College of Medicine totaling \$6.25 million (RP101499, RP130485, RP140102, RP170172, RP220468), as well as two Research Training program grants totaling \$8 million (RP160283, RP210027). The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Arteaga in 2017 with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR170061).

47. CPRIT Scholar Aryeh Warmflash, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Biosciences at Rice University, and colleagues are researching neurulation, the embryonic development stage where many birth defects and spontaneous abortions take place. In May 2023, Dr. Warmflash received a five-year, \$1.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop self-organizing systems that model key cellular processes involved in embryogenesis. "In the mammalian or human embryo, that symmetry is initially unbroken. But eventually, the embryo has to figure out 'this side is going to be the head, and this is going to be the back' and so on. The cells have to break that symmetry themselves. We want to understand how they do that," said Dr. Warmflash. Rice University recruited Dr. Warmflash in 2014 with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR140073).

48. The James P. Allison Institute at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center announced on May 10, 2023, the appointment of its first members, James P. Allison, Ph.D., Padmanee Sharma, M.D., Ph.D., Jennifer Wargo, M.D., Sangeeta Goswami, M.D., Ph.D., and Kenneth Hu, Ph.D. These members include pioneering researchers who have made notable contributions to science as well as rising stars on the path toward important breakthroughs. "We are proud to be joined by these stellar scientists, and we are confident that together we will set the tone for the exceptional research we aim to support at the Allison Institute," said Dr. Allison, director of the Allison Institute and regental Chair of Immunology at MD Anderson. "Our collective expertise in areas that now will include immune-microbiome interactions, epigenetic mechanisms, and novel methods for spatial transcriptomics and proteomics fits well with our priority research areas, and we look forward to collaboratively advancing the field." The Allison Institute members will incorporate laboratory and clinical insights to develop novel and synergetic therapies that enable cures for more patients. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Allison in 2011 with the support of a \$10 million CPRIT Recruitment of established Investigators grant (R1203). Dr. Sharma received a \$1.4 million Individual Investigator Research Award in 2011 (RP120108) and Dr. Wargo received two Academic Research awards (RP150030, RP200574) in 2015 and 2020 totaling \$1.15 million.

49. Rice University and Texas Southern University (TSU) announced a partnership on May 10, 2023, to share resources, expertise, and best practices to build stronger bridges between their institutions and communities. The goal is to foster meaningful dialogue; seed new research partnerships; create additional opportunities for students, faculty, and staff at both universities; and be a boon to Houston. TSU's Gulf Coast Consortia (GCC) Center for Comprehensive PK/PD and Formulation, funded by a \$4.7 million CPRIT Core Facility Support Awards grant (RP190581) in 2019, is a state-of-the-art drug development core facility with experienced faculty from TSU's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, the University of Houston's College of Pharmacy, and the GCC for Quantitative Biomedical Sciences at Rice University. The GCC consists of seven institutions at the Texas Medical Center. "The partnership will bring many benefits, contributing to the growth and success of both institutions and promoting greater equity and inclusion in higher education and beyond," said Rice President Reginald DesRoches.

50. On May 16, 2023, Baylor College of Medicine recognized Maria Carmenza Mejia, M.D., M.P.H., FACPM, with the Clark Faculty Service Award. The Clark Faculty Service Award honors a Baylor College of Medicine faculty member whose exemplary service contributions represent their professions and Baylor's mission, vision and values at the highest level. Dr. Mejia, associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, is co-program director of the CPRIT-funded lung cancer screening projects, "Equitable Access to Lung Cancer Screening and Smoking Cessation Treatment: A Comprehensive Primary Care and Community Health Approach" (PP180016) and its expansion award, "Expansion of the Lung Cancer Screening and Tobacco Control Network to Rural and Medically Underserved Populations" (PP210044) totaling \$3.47 million.

51. The Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce (GHWCC) recognized Jessica Duckworth as one of its "Breakthrough Women of 2023" at its GHWCC Annual Conference on May 19, 2023. Ms. Duckworth, Chief Operating Officer of The Rose and project director of multiple CPRIT awards, is responsible for managing all clinical and support staff, mobile operations, strategic business development, information systems, and new initiatives for The Rose. She is a distinguished leader in the breast imaging industry, as well as a recent breast cancer survivor. As a powerful force in the workplace, she uses her extensive knowledge of breast imaging, and her passion for work and community service, along with her own personal breast cancer journey, to help lead The Rose and support the organization's mission. CPRIT awarded The Rose eight CPRIT breast cancer screening and early detection grants since 2010 (PP100096, PP110154, PP120040, PP140171, PP150080, PP170091, PP190043, PP220015) totaling nearly \$12 million.

52. The Texas A&M Health Center of Excellence in Cancer Research hosted its first cancer research symposium in College Station, Texas, on May 22, 2023, which brought together cancer researchers from across the region. The symposium highlighted the outstanding cancer research being performed across Texas A&M University and raised awareness of the newly established cancer center, which was made possible through a \$6 million grant awarded CPRIT in March 2023. Prior to the formation of the Center of Excellence in Cancer Research, collaboration between cancer researchers across Texas A&M was difficult and needed focus. "Faculty were trying to bridge together, but we had no real resources. The only way we could secure resources to sustain and integrate was to compete for this large, externally funded award," said the center's deputy director, Robert Chapkin, Ph.D. Director of the center, Kenneth Ramos, M.D., Ph.D., joined forces with Dr. Chapkin to integrate the diverse cancer-related research activities across the university. Texas A&M University System Health Science Center received a \$6 million CPRIT Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer Award (RP230204) to build a critical mass of cancer researchers at Texas A&M University, facilitate collaborations within and outside the institution, and support innovative cancer research.

53. The Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Technology (TAMEST) honored two preeminent researchers at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center with awards at its annual conference on May 24.

Jennifer Wargo, M.D., professor, Department of Surgical Oncology and Genomic Medicine at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, received the 2023 Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in Medicine. The Edith and Peter O'Donnell Awards annually recognize rising Texas researchers who are addressing the essential role that science and technology play in society, and whose work meets the highest standards of exemplary professional performance, creativity, and resourcefulness. She was chosen for her seminal contributions to the understanding of how the microbiome influences responses to immunotherapy and other forms of cancer treatment. Dr. Wargo led a team of researchers that cataloged the intestinal microbiomes in patients with melanoma, demonstrating that patients with metastatic melanoma had improved responses to immunotherapy if they had a more diverse population of microbes or an abundance of certain types of bacteria in their gut. The December 24, 2021, issue of *Science*, published the findings, which contributed to launching a new line of inquiry in cancer research – evaluating whether scientists can improve therapeutic efficacy and outcomes by modulating the microbiome. Dr. Wargo has been the principal investigator in two CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP200574, RP150030) awarded to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center totaling \$1.15 million.

Florencia McAllister, M.D., associate professor, Department of Clinical Cancer Prevention, Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology and Immunology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center was awarded the 2023 Mary Beth Maddox Award and Lectureship in cancer research. This award recognizes women scientists in Texas bringing new ideas and innovations to the fight against cancer. Dr. McAllister is being honored for her pioneering research on the intra-tumoral bacteria detected in long-term pancreatic cancer survivors and the discovery of a gut-tumor axis that inspired the use of fecal microbial transplants to improve therapy outcomes. Dr. McAllister will promote her work and discoveries across the state through a series of lectures at the four NIH National Cancer Institute Designated Cancer Centers in Texas. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center received a \$2 million CPRIT Individual Investigator Research Awards for Clinical Translation grant (RP200173) in February 2020 to help support Dr. McAllister's research on the role of gut and tumor bacteria in modulating the tumor microenvironment and tumor growth.

54. On May 26, 2023, Invectys USA Inc., announced it has received the "Best Translational Development" award from MATWIN, a French accelerator supporting translational innovation in oncology, for its anti-HLA-G CAR-T cells. Invectys' cutting-edge CAR-T cell therapy, IVS-3001, targets the rarely exploited immune checkpoint HLA-G. Normally expressed only during pregnancy, this checkpoint protects the fetus from the mother's immune system, which would otherwise recognize it as foreign, by shutting down the immune system's response to its presence. In cancer, this mechanism is often hijacked by tumors to create a protective microenvironment, preventing the patient's defenses from killing the cancer cells. The anti-HLA-G cell therapy had already garnered MATWIN's attention in 2019, when Invectys had already won the Best Project award for its anti-HLA-G project. Invectys USA, Inc. received a \$14.2 million CPRIT Product Development Research grant (DP200034) in May 2020.

55. The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio announced on May 26, 2023, that CPRIT Scholar Elizabeth Wasmuth, Ph.D., received the Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Fund Young Investigator Award for her project to uncover therapeutic vulnerabilities in androgen receptor signaling in treatment-resistant prostate cancer. Dr. Wasmuth, an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Structural Biology, is an accomplished junior investigator who focuses on understanding the structure and function of the androgen receptor, specifically the mechanism by which oncoproteins regulate androgen receptor activity, and how such functional interactions contribute to prostate cancer development, progression, and acquired resistance to current therapeutics. The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio recruited Dr. Wasmuth in 2022 with the support of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR220068).

56. In June 2023, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Outstanding Investigator Award was awarded to Benjamin Deneen, Ph.D., professor and chair in neurosurgery and director of the Center for Cancer Neuroscience at Baylor College of Medicine. This is a highly competitive distinction and includes up to \$7.4 million in funding over an eight-year period to support investigators and their labs rather than on a project-by-project basis. Deneen's research will focus on the role astrocytes play in brain circuit control. Astrocytes are a form of glial cells that make up most cells in the central nervous system and play essential roles in brain circuit activity. "Central to the physiological activities of every cell are transcription factors (TFs), but their exact function in astrocytes is not fully defined. My work has focused on the molecular, cellular and physiological roles that TFs play in astrocyte function in the adult brain," said Dr. Deneen. Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Deneen were awarded two CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP150334, RP160192) in 2015 totaling \$2.72 million to comprehensively define the cellular and functional heterogeneity of diverse cell populations in malignant glioma.

57. The Endocrine Society has selected Lee Kraus, Ph.D., professor and director of the Green Center for Reproductive Biology Sciences, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, to join its Board of Directors for a three-year term beginning in June 2023. Dr. Kraus's research interests include signal regulated transcription, chromatin and gene regulation, nuclear receptors, PARPs, and NAD+ metabolism and signaling. He has been active in these fields as a scientist, conference organizer, journal editor, editorial board member, NIH grant reviewer, frequent manuscript reviewer, teacher, and consultant. Dr. Kraus has published over 150 original research articles in peer-reviewed journals, many in leading science journals. Dr. Kraus has been the principal investigator in six CPRIT Academic Research grants since 2013, the most recent grant (RP220325) was awarded in February 2022 for \$1 million to support Dr. Kraus's research in breast and ovarian cancers.

58. In June 2023, the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) and the American Society for Nutrition Foundation (ASFN), named Robert Chapkin, Ph.D., chair, Department of Nutrition at the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the recipient of the Mary Swartz Rose Senior Investigator Award. This award recognizes an investigator who is conducting mechanistic, epidemiological, clinical and/or translational research contributing to the understanding of the benefits and a healthy dietary pattern. Dr. Chapkin, a four-time CPRIT Academic Research principal investigator, was selected for his outstanding research on the safety and efficacy of bioactive compounds for

human health. “Our achievements, in concert with innovation in basic research, have propelled the Chapkin Lab to securing unprecedented funding from the National Institutes of Health’s National Cancer Institute and the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas,” said Dr. Chapkin. Texas Agrilife Research received four CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP100473, RP120028, RP160589, RP200604) totaling \$1.5 million.

59. Zhenpeng Qin, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering at The University of Texas at Dallas, was named a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) in June 2023. Honorees, who are nominated by ASME members and fellows, must have 10 or more years of active practice and at least 10 years of active corporate membership in ASME. In recent years, Dr. Qin has led the development of a more accurate rapid test for diagnosing infectious diseases, a technique to open the blood-brain barrier temporarily to deliver medication to the brain, and tools that make it possible to study how neuropeptides affect brain circuits and how they affect behavior in real time. He and his colleagues launched Avsana Labs, of which he is president, to commercialize the rapid-test technology through UT Dallas’ Venture Development Center. Dr. Qin has been the PI in four CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP160770, RP180846, RP190278, RP210236) and has received numerous honors for his research, including the 2022 Y.C. Fung Early Career Award from the ASME.

60. David Poplack, M.D., director of Global HOPE (Hematology-Oncology Pediatric Excellence) and professor in the Hematology and Oncology Section of the Department of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine, received the 2023 Excellence in Teaching Award from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) during its annual meeting in June, 2023. Recipients of the Excellence in Teaching Award are selected for their outstanding ability to expand trainees’ patient connection and communication skills, broaden their vision of patient-physician interaction and stimulate their personal and professional growth. Dr. Poplack has authored 370 original articles and book chapters in the field of pediatric oncology, in addition to being a founding co-editor of *Principles and Practice of Pediatric Oncology*, the leading textbook for pediatric oncology. He also developed the “Passport for Care,” an interactive website that addresses the need to provide long-term survivors of childhood cancer and their caregivers with screening guidelines and resources individualized to the survivor’s treatment history. Dr. Poplack has been the Principal Investigator in four CPRIT Prevention grants (PP100090, PP130070, PP170036, PP210031) and two CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP101335-C1, RP140022-AC) totaling \$4.6 million since 2010.

61. CPRIT Scholar Sean J. Morrison, Ph.D., Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and founding director and professor at the Children’s Medical Center Research Institute, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, was elected by his peers as an associate member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) in June 2023. Fiona Watt, EMBO director, said of the newly elected members who reside in more than 20 countries, “These remarkable scientists have unraveled molecular secrets of life, deepened our understanding of health and disease, and are paving the way for further discoveries and innovations.” Dr. Morrison studies the cellular and molecular mechanisms that regulate stem cell function and the role they play in cancer. His laboratory pioneered methods to purify stem cells from multiple tissues and discovered a series of key regulators that distinguish stem cell self-renewal from the proliferation of restricted progenitors in the same tissues. Dr. Morrison was recruited by The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center from the University of Michigan with the support of a \$10 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1109) in 2011 and has been the principal investigator in four additional CPRIT Academic Research grants since 2016 (RP170114, RP170633, RP180778, RP220492) totaling \$7.6 million.

62. On July 6, 2023, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) announced the Equity in Access Research Program’s second cohort of award recipients, a group of outstanding health services researchers who have received \$3.8 million in combined funding, to ensure that all patients with and survivors of a blood cancer achieve access to the cancer care and services they need throughout their lives. Among the recipients is CPRIT Scholar Christopher Flowers, M.D., M.S., chair of the Department of Lymphoma-Myeloma at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Together with Meng Li, Ph.D., Sc.M., Dr. Flowers is investigating how financial hardship affects quality of life and survival in patients with non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL). This work aims to determine what role insurance coverage plays in access to care, survival, and financial hardship among patients with NHL and to what extent insurance coverage influences racial disparities in access and outcomes. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Flowers with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR190079) in May 2019.

63. CPRIT Scholar Bissan Al-Lazikani, Ph.D., professor of Genomic Medicine at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, was inducted into the 2023 Class of the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB) Distinguished Fellows in July 2023. The International Society for Computational Biology introduced the ISCB Fellows Program in 2009 to honor members that have distinguished

themselves through outstanding contributions to the fields of computational biology and bioinformatics. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Al-Lazikani in 2020 with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR210007).

64. Kytopen, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology startup biotechnology company specializing in scalable gene editing platforms, announced on July 11, 2023, that it has selected CPRIT Scholar Omid Veiseh, Ph.D., an associate professor of bioengineering at Rice University, for a strategic collaboration to drive cutting-edge research in genome engineering and expedite the discovery of novel cell therapies. Dr. Veiseh's renowned translational medical research laboratory will host the placement of Kytopen's new high-throughput gene editing instrument, Flowfect Discover, along with Kytopen's manufacturing-scale platform, Flowfect Tx, at his laboratory. Kytopen created the Flowfect platforms to reduce the time of therapeutic development from years to months reducing the overall costs of creating and manufacturing therapies. Rice University recruited Dr. Veiseh to Texas from MIT in 2016 with the support of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR160047); CPRIT also supported his research with a \$250,000 High-Impact, High-Risk research award in 2021 (RP210205).

65. Baylor College of Medicine announced on July 19, 2023, that CPRIT Scholar S. Gail Eckhardt, MD, FASCO, has been named associate dean for Experimental Therapeutics and associate director for Translational Research at the Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center beginning in September 2023. Dr. Eckhardt will help lead the development of experimental therapeutics from bench to bedside. She also will hold the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation Endowed Chair at Baylor. She joins Baylor from The University of Texas at Austin's Dell Medical School, where she has been a tenured professor, inaugural director of the Livestrong Cancer Institutes, chair of the Department of Oncology and associate dean of cancer programs. Dr. Eckhardt's expertise is in the preclinical and early clinical development of combinations of molecularly targeted compounds in cancer. She has been the principal investigator on grants involving early clinical trials and colorectal cancer research, has conducted numerous early phase clinical trials, and has published more than 200 manuscripts. The University of Texas at Austin recruited Dr. Eckhardt in 2016 with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR160093).

66. In July, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center named 10 early career faculty members to the 2023 class of Andrew Sabin Family Fellows. Established by philanthropist Andrew Sabin through a generous \$30 million endowment in 2015, the Sabin Family Fellowship program nurtures brilliant rising clinicians and scientists to deliver cancer breakthroughs. Six of the new fellows are CPRIT scholars or principal investigators, including CPRIT Scholar Jihye Yun, Ph.D., CPRIT Scholar Carl Gay, M.D., Ph.D., CPRIT Scholar Robert Jenq, M.D., CPRIT Scholar Pavan Bachireddy, M.D., Anil Korkut, Ph.D., and CPRIT Scholar Nidhi Sahni, Ph.D. Each Sabin Family Fellow will receive \$100,000 over two years. This funding frees researchers to pursue novel or high-risk, high-reward scientific endeavors early in their careers when federal and private funding opportunities often are limited. The work of the Sabin Family Fellows spans the cancer care continuum, from basic science to translational research to survivorship, and is already impacting the lives of patients at MD Anderson. (RR170039, RP210159, RR160089, RR210008, RP170640, and RR160021)

67. The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation named CPRIT Scholar Pavan Bachireddy, M.D., The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, one of six new Damon Runyon Clinical Investigators in July 2023. The recipients of this prestigious award are outstanding, early-career physician-scientists conducting patient-oriented cancer research at major research centers under the mentorship of the nation's leading scientists and clinicians. The Clinical Investigator Award program was designed to increase the number of physicians capable of moving seamlessly between the laboratory and the patient's bedside in search of breakthrough treatments. Each awardee will receive \$600,000 over three years. Dr. Bachireddy, who is mentored by Jeffrey J. Mouldrem, M.D., an international leader in stem cell transplantation and cellular therapies, will identify immunosuppressive mechanisms that may be targeted to halt MRD progression using cutting-edge machine learning approaches. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Bachireddy in 2020 with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR210008).

68. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) announced in July 2023 the newest cohort supported by the Gilliam Fellows Program in recognition of outstanding research in their respective scientific fields and their commitment to building a more inclusive scientific ecosystem. Each student-adviser pair will receive an annual award totaling \$53,000 for up to three years. Student Roy Garcia and his advisor, CPRIT Scholar Maralice Conacci-Sorrell, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Biomedical Science at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, were among this year's recipients. Gilliam advisers participate in a year-long mentorship development course led by Facilitator-Scholars from HHMI's Scientific Mentorship Initiative. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr.

Conacci-Sorrell in May 2015 from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR150059).

69. On July 31, 2023, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center was named number one in the nation for cancer care in the *U.S. News & World Report's* 2023-24 "Best Hospitals" survey. The institution has been one of the nation's top two hospitals for cancer care since the survey's inception in 1990. "At MD Anderson, we remain singularly focused on eliminating cancer," said Peter WT Pisters, M.D., President of MD Anderson. "We are pleased to see this commitment recognized, but there is work still to be done."

70. On August 2, 2023, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center announced that CPRIT Scholar Christopher Flowers, M.D., was selected as division head of Cancer Medicine after a competitive national search. Dr. Flowers is an active clinician who leads research on cancer outcomes, cancer informatics, and early-stage clinical trials focusing on the clinical development of novel therapeutics for B-cell lymphomas. The Division of Cancer Medicine is the largest academic division at MD Anderson involving more than 300 faculty and over 2,000 staff. "Chris is highly regarded in the hematology and medical oncology communities, and his deep commitment to training and mentoring the next generation is inspiring," said Peter WT Pisters, M.D., President of MD Anderson. Dr. Flowers has served in many leadership roles for national professional societies, including serving as Chair of the ASCO Health Disparities Committee. In 2018, he was named a Fellow of ASCO. In 2022, he was named an African American Healthcare Leader to Know by Becker's Hospital Review and was elected to the Association of American Physicians. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Flowers with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR190079) in May 2019.

71. On August 3, 2023, the Biden Cancer Moonshot announced the inaugural cohort of Cancer Moonshot Scholars, a program launched by President Biden last year to support early-career researchers and help build a cancer research workforce that better represents the diversity of America. The Biden-Harris Administration, through the National Cancer Institute (NCI), is committing \$5.4 million in the first year of these multi-year awards to support the inaugural cohort of 11 Cancer Moonshot Scholars. Chosen as one of the 11 inaugural Scholars, CPRIT Scholar Todd Aguilera, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the department of radiation oncology with expertise in molecular engineering, molecular imaging, and tumor immunology from The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, will receive nearly \$3.3 million from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) over five years to fund research seeking new treatments for rectal cancer. This form of cancer is increasingly affecting young people and those from diverse backgrounds who may have limited access to health care and cancer screenings. "There is a critical need to pioneer new treatment combinations so patients can be definitively treated with radiation and systemic therapy and avoid invasive surgeries," Dr. Aguilera said. "We developed an integrated approach to assess early biopsy tissue after short-course radiation therapy, evaluating molecular, cellular, and spatial dynamics that could improve our ability to identify promising combination therapies." The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Aguilera from Stanford University in 2017 with the support of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR170051).

72. Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center announced August 3, 2023, that Yangzom D. Bhutia, D.V.M., Ph.D., an associate professor in the department of cell biology and biochemistry, leveraged research support from the initial CPRIT Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer (TREC) Awards issued in 2021 to secure a \$1.76 million peer-reviewed five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute to develop a unique drug target to treat pancreatic cancer. CPRIT awarded Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center a \$6 million TREC grant in August 2021 (RP210154). The TREC award is a multicomponent award designed to strengthen cancer research through supporting investigator-initiated research projects, recruitment of new junior faculty, and research infrastructure at institutions located in regions of Texas that have historically received low levels of peer-reviewed cancer research funding.

73. The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) announced on August 8, 2023, that Amelie Ramirez, DrPH, MPH, leader of Salud America! at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, is the recipient of the 2023 Cancer Health Equity Award. The award recognizes exceptional leadership in promoting health equity, mitigating cancer disparities, and advocating for diversity and inclusion at a cancer center. Dr. Ramirez conducts research and interventions to reduce Latino cancer disparities. She aims to reduce lung cancer with Quitxt, a bilingual text-message service which helps Latino young adults quit smoking and is funded by CPRIT. She currently directs the Salud America! national multimedia program to empower its vast network of over 500,000 community and school leaders to drive healthy policy and system changes to promote health equity and support for Latino families. Dr. Ramirez is the principal investigator in three CPRIT Prevention grants (PP140176, PP170099, PP180092) awarded to The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in 2014, 2017, and 2018, totaling \$4.2 million.

74. IMUNON, Inc., a clinical-stage drug-development company focused on developing non-viral DNA-mediated immunotherapy and next-generation vaccines, announced the addition of CPRIT Scholar Sachet A. Shukla, Ph.D., to the company's scientific advisory board on August 14, 2023. Dr. Shukla is an assistant professor in the Department of Hematopoietic Biology and Malignancy at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he also serves as computational director of MD Anderson's ECLIPSE Moon Shot Research platform, and director of HBM's Cancer Vaccine Program. He has developed a computational method called Polysolver for accurate typing and mutation detection in the highly polymorphic human leukocyte antigen (HLA) genes. He also developed a computational pipeline for the rational design of neoantigen-based vaccines that has already been used in two first-in-man clinical trials at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The University of Texas MD Anderson recruited Dr. Shukla in 2021 with the support of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR220009).

75. On August 16, 2023, The American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP) announced that CPRIT Scholar Qing Zhang, Ph.D., associate professor of pathology at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, is the recipient of the 2024 American Society for Investigative Pathology Outstanding Investigator Award, which recognizes midcareer investigators who have demonstrated excellence in experimental pathology research. Dr. Zhang studies how cancer cells sense low oxygen tension, acclimate to that stressful environment, and quickly multiply in solid cancers. "Our research aims to determine the underlying cause of how these cancer cells adapt to the harsh living environment in the oxygen-deprived condition, which makes them more aggressive and more resistant to radiation or chemotherapy," said Dr. Zhang, who is also Chief Scientific Officer for the Breast Cancer Research Program at the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center and co-director of the Kidney Cancer Career Enhancement Program at UT Southwestern. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recruited Dr. Zhang in 2019 with support of a \$4 million Recruitment of Rising Stars grant (RR190058).

76. On August 17, 2023, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center honored faculty members with the institution's most prestigious endowed faculty awards. Jennifer Wargo, M.D., professor, Department of Surgical Oncology and Director of the Platform for Innovative Microbiome and Translational Research, was awarded The Jack and Beverly Randall Prize for Excellence in Cancer Research, which was established in 2011 to encourage innovative ideas and the novel thinking necessary to end cancer. Han Liang, Ph.D., professor and chair, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, was one of two awardees of the R. Lee Clark Prize, established in 2016 to recognize MD Anderson faculty in clinical research and basic/translational research. The prize honors the dedication to scholarship, service and social responsibility embraced by the late R. Lee Clark, M.D., MD Anderson's first President. Both Dr. Wargo and Dr. Liang have been principal investigators in CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP200574 and RP140462). "These incredible faculty members exemplify the gold standards of excellence that distinguish MD Anderson and advance our mission to end cancer in Texas, the nation and the world," said President Peter WT Pisters, M.D.

77. McWilliams School of Biomedical Informatics at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston has appointed CPRIT Scholar Xiaoqian Jiang, Ph.D., as the new chair of Health Data Science and Artificial Intelligence beginning on September 1, 2023. Currently, Dr. Jiang holds the Christopher Sarofim Family Professorship in Biomedical Informatics and Bioengineering. His research focuses on advanced machine learning and security/privacy technologies for health care. For the past several years, Dr. Jiang has co-taught the course Foundations of Biomedical Information Sciences II and serves as a committee chair or committee member for more than a dozen Ph.D. and Doctor of Health Informatics Students at the school. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston recruited Dr. Jiang in 2018 from the University of California San Diego with the support of a \$4 million CPRIT Recruitment of Rising Starts grant (RR180012).

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