The Tisch Cancer Institute is now part of the newly formed Mount Sinai Health System, the most comprehensive health system in the New York metropolitan region, encompassing seven hospital locations throughout the city, and Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The new health system will offer patients increased access to specialty care, including cancer care.

Faculty from The Tisch Cancer Institute recently visited the Faculté de Médecine Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC) in Paris for a two-day meeting to discuss collaboration between the two institutions on research projects and education, including student exchanges, fellowships, MD/PhD programs, and summer school. The areas of collaboration include cancer immunotherapy, head and neck cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma, and prostate cancer.

UPMC is one of the top-ranked universities in the world, and is one of the largest scientific and medical institutions in France. The collaboration between The Tisch Cancer Institute and UPMC would provide both institutions with an exchange of ideas, and increased research and training opportunities in New York and Paris.

In other news, The Tisch Cancer Institute has produced a video on its cancer clinical trials. The video is available in English and Spanish, and can be seen on Mount Sinai’s YouTube channel, or by visiting www.mountsinai.org/cancerclinicaltrials.

Accelerating Science – Advancing Medicine

The Tisch Cancer Institute is committed to advancing the field of cancer research and treatment, locally and globally.

The Tisch Cancer Institute has initiated an Immunotherapy Program under the direction of Nina Bhardwaj, MD, PhD, and Miriam Merad, MD, PhD. The program includes the building of a vaccine facility, as well as an expanded immune monitoring core. Other faculty who recently joined the new program are: Rachel Sabado, PhD, Facility Director of the Vaccine and Cell-Therapy Core Laboratory; Emmanuelle Godfroy, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine (Hematology and Medical Oncology); and Olivier Manches, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine (Hematology and Medical Oncology).

Mount Sinai is beginning to implement some of the most promising interventions, including antibody therapies such as checkpoint blockade inhibitors and monoclonal antibodies that target cancer-associated proteins; adoptive T-cell therapy; growth factors (cytokines); drug interventions that impact the immune system; and cancer vaccines.

Our goal is to offer patients a personalized approach to treating their cancers using state-of-the-art technologies, including immune-based therapies.
QOPI Certification Program Recognizes Mount Sinai’s GI Medical Oncology Practice

The Mount Sinai Hospital’s Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology practice is the first site in Manhattan, and one of only 200 sites nationwide, to have been recognized by the Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®) Certification Program, an affiliate of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

The QOPI® Certification Program provides a three-year certification for outpatient hematology-oncology practices that meet the highest standards for providing quality cancer care. QOPI certification signifies that an outpatient oncology practice has met core standards in areas that include staff training and education, chemotherapy orders and drug preparation, patient consent and education, safe chemotherapy administration, and monitoring and assessment of patient well-being.

New Faces

Ramon Parsons, MD, PhD, Chair of the Department of Oncological Sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, is a highly acclaimed researcher in cancer genetics, who is known for discovering the PTEN tumor suppressor. He brings an interdisciplinary approach to cancer treatment and prevention. His research identifies the genetic and biochemical changes that lead a normal cell to develop into aggressive cancer cells.

Arvin Dar, PhD, Assistant Professor in the departments of Oncological Sciences and Structural and Chemical Biology, investigates one of the most frequently activated pathways in cancer biology: the Ras-Mitogen Activated Protein Kinase (MAPK) pathway.

Yujin Hoshida, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine (Division of Liver Diseases), focuses on generating genomic data of worldwide liver cirrhosis and cancer populations. He has established molecular prognostic indicators that are ready for clinical use, and disseminated the datasets as a public database.

David Mulholland, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine (Division of Hematology/Medical Oncology), conducts research into castrate-resistant prostate cancer (CRPC) with a focus on the translational application of pre-clinical models for prostate cancer and other solid tumors.

Poulikos Poulikakos, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Oncological Sciences, investigates the use of small molecule inhibitors to understand the role of signal transduction networks in tumor maintenance and tumor resistance to targeted therapies.

Using Fruit Flies to Find New Drug Applications

The Mount Sinai Health System recently started a novel, personalized drug discovery screening program using fruit flies. The program is being run by Ross Cagan, PhD, Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Biological Sciences, and Director of the Center for Personalized Cancer Therapeutics.

Dr. Cagan and his team create a genetic copy of a patient’s tumor in a fruit fly and then test drug combinations on the tumor to see if they work. All of the drugs have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, but not necessarily for cancer.

In mid-February, the CBS Sunday Morning show aired a segment about the program that featured Dr. Cagan and patient Mark Beeninga, who turned to Mount Sinai after becoming resistant to treatments for medullary thyroid cancer. The three-drug combination that Tirtha Das, PhD, a member of Dr. Cagan’s team found for Mr. Beeninga, has shown early signs of promise.

Esquire magazine also featured an article on Mount Sinai’s Center for Personalized Cancer Therapeutics and the pioneering work being done under the leadership of Eric Schadt, PhD, Director of the Icahn Institute of Genomics and Multiscale Biology.

For patient referrals, contact Kathleen Edmondson-Martin, Nurse Coordinator at kathleen.edmondson-martin@mountsinai.org or 212-824-8510.