ACCELERATING SCIENCE – ADVANCING MEDICINE

The Tisch Cancer Institute at The Mount Sinai Medical Center brings together exceptional scientists and clinicians from multiple disciplines. The Institute, established in 2008, is currently focused on four main areas of growth: building an infrastructure based on the National Cancer Institute model; advancing translational research; promoting integrated care; and expanding research programs that span all cancers.

The Tisch Cancer Institute is embedded within a renowned medical center that has world-class research facilities, one of the nation's top-ranked hospitals, and an outstanding medical school. Patients have access to the best possible cancer care across a variety of disciplines including medical, surgical, and radiation treatments; palliative care; behavioral medicine; physical therapy; psychosocial services—and cutting-edge cancer research. For fully integrated, multidisciplinary care, our patients are also treated by the best specialists in every field at Mount Sinai. Whether they experience co-morbidities during treatment, require specialized follow-up care, or want to preserve fertility during treatment, they can receive seamless referrals.

Our Cancer Clinical Trials Office (CCTO) is under new leadership, with Marshall Posner, MD, recently appointed as its Medical Director. We project that the CCTO's staff will double over the next 3-4 years, while we continue to develop a balanced portfolio of clinical trials. We will encourage more patients to enroll in clinical trials, and we will develop outreach programs specially tailored to the East and Central Harlem communities in New York City.

This is an exciting time for us as the Institute expands existing programs, including the cellular and molecular biology of cancer and novel regulatory mechanisms of cancer, cancer stem cells, new cellular therapies and vaccines, radiation oncology, and behavioral medicine. Mount Sinai's facilities devoted to cancer will nearly double by 2012 when the new Center for Science and Medicine building opens, providing more than four floors of clinical, research and imaging space. The Dubin Breast Center will also provide 15,000 square feet of space for breast care and clinical research.

The Tisch Cancer Institute truly exemplifies Mount Sinai's sustained commitment to developing interdisciplinary institutes. Through this Director's Report and others in the future, we look forward to sharing news about The Tisch Cancer Institute's outstanding programs and faculty.

Steven J. Burakoff, MD

Six-Gene Molecular Test Increases Accuracy in Diagnosing Prostate Cancer

A new six-gene molecular diagnostic test, used in combination with a conventional prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening, sharply increases the accuracy of prostate cancer diagnosis. The multicenter study, led by William K. Oh, MD, Chief of the Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology, Professor of Medicine and Urology and Ezra M. Greenspan, MD Professor in Clinical Cancer Therapeutics, has enrolled more than 200 men with prostate cancer to date and will involve approximately 1,000 men in all.

The whole-blood RNA transcript-based test, when combined with a PSA test, accurately detects prostate cancer more than 90 percent of the time, whereas earlier studies suggested that the conventional PSA test is 60-70 percent accurate. Men who are found to have elevated levels of PSA are often referred for a biopsy, yet nearly two-thirds of biopsies do not find any cancerous cells. This high rate of “false positive” PSA test results underscores the need for a more accurate method for detecting prostate cancer.
PHILANTHROPY

The Dubin Breast Center

Mount Sinai Trustee Glenn Dubin and his wife, Eva Andersson-Dubin, MD, are dedicated to building a comprehensive breast care center at Mount Sinai bringing together the best in radiology, medical oncology, surgery, radiation oncology, pathology, clinical genetics, psychosocial support, and clinical translational research. Under one roof, patients will have seamless care and access to the latest research studies and clinical trials.

To make the Dubin Breast Center a reality, the Dubins have generously donated their own resources and they have called on friends and associates to contribute. They have hosted events in New York, Greenwich, and Palm Beach—contributing and raising more than $20 million to date.

Co-led by George Raptis, MD, MBA, and Elisa Port, MD, FACS, the Dubin Breast Center will be a 15,000-square-foot facility and is expected to open before the end of 2010. By combining breast care and research in a single setting, the Dubin Breast Center will provide patients and clinical investigators with critical access to each other, facilitating the translational research that leads to medical breakthroughs and ultimately improves care for all.

PAOLO BOFFETTA, MD, MPH, has been named as Deputy Director of the Tisch Cancer Institute and Associate Director of Population Science. He is also overseeing the Cancer Epidemiology program. Dr. Boffetta, a world-renowned epidemiologist, was the Coordinator of the Genetics and Epidemiology Cluster and the Director of the Training Program at the International Agency for Research on Cancer/World Health Organization in Lyon, France prior to joining Mount Sinai.

MARBEL POSNER, MD, is the new Medical Director of the Head and Neck Medical Oncology program and Medical Director of the Cancer Clinical Trials Office. Previously, he was the Medical Director of the Head and Neck Oncology Program at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Dr. Posner’s clinical research in head and neck cancer has focused on understanding and improving the multimodality therapy of locally advanced squamous cell cancer. With a long-standing interest in immunology and antibodies, he has also maintained an active National Institutes of Health-funded research effort in human antibody responses and antibody therapeutics.

SUNDAR JAGANNATH, MD, comes to Mount Sinai from St. Vincent’s Comprehensive Cancer Center in New York City, where he was chief of the multiple myeloma service and bone marrow transplant program, seeing more than 200 new patients annually. Dr. Jagannath will be Director for the Multiple Myeloma Program at The Tisch Cancer Institute, developing the Multiple Myeloma and Stem Cell Transplant Program into a premier program. Also joining Mount Sinai will be Dr. Jagannath’s colleague from St. Vincent’s, Ajai Chari, MD. Dr. Chari will provide clinical services and conduct research as a Hematology Oncologist.

E. PREMKUMAR (PREM) REDDY, PHD, has joined The Tisch Cancer Institute as Director of Cancer Experimental Therapeutics. A pioneer in cancer biology, Dr. Reddy made seminal discoveries which provided an increased understanding of the molecular basis of cancer. He is one of the most frequently cited cancer researchers in the world. Dr. Reddy has brought a number of promising cancer drugs to clinical trials, including ON01910 (in Phase II trials for treating myeloid leukemias as well as metastatic breast, ovarian, and pancreatic cancers in combination with other drugs) and ON123300 (currently undergoing pre-clinical evaluation), a small-molecule inhibitor of Cdk4 that has shown remarkable efficacy for the therapy of human mantle cell lymphomas and ErbB2-positive breast cancers.

ELISA PORT, MD, FACS, has been appointed as Chief of Breast Surgery and will also serve as Co-Director of the Dubin Breast Center with George Raptis, MD, MBA. Dr. Port is a leading expert in sentinel-node biopsy, a procedure that allows physicians to determine the patient’s breast cancer stage, and the use of breast MRI in high-risk patients. She was most recently an Associate Member and Associate Attending Surgeon at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Memorial Hospital for Cancer and Allied Diseases.