The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health
National Cancer Institute and FDA Oncology Center of Excellence

Public Meeting on Development of a Public Private Partnership Developing Anti-Cancer Therapies for Ultra-Rare Tumor Indications

August 24, 2023

Speaker and Panelist Bios

Speakers

Dr. Stacey Adam, PhD is an Associate Vice President at the FNIH, leading many public-private partnerships, such as Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV); the Biomarkers Consortium (Cancer and Metabolic Disorders Steering Committees) and their projects; Accelerating Medicines Partnerships (AMPs)-Common Metabolic Diseases, Heart Failure, and Parkinson's Disease; Partnership for Accelerating Cancer Therapies (PACT); and the Lung Master protocol (Lung-MAP) clinical trial.

Prior to FNIH, Dr. Adam was a Manager at Deloitte Consulting in the Federal Life Sciences and Healthcare Strategy practice where she supported many federal and non-profit client projects. Before Deloitte, Dr. Adam conducted her postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University School of Medicine, where she was both an NIH and American Cancer Society supported fellow, and she earned her PhD in Pharmacology with a Certificate in Mammalian Toxicology from Duke University.

Dr. Monica Bertagnolli, MD is the 16th Director of the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), appointed to this position in October 2022 by President Joseph R. Biden. Prior to this, she served as the Richard E. Wilson Professor of Surgery in the Field of Surgical Oncology at Harvard Medical School, and a member of the Gastrointestinal Cancer and Sarcoma Disease Centers at Dana-Farber Brigham Cancer Center. Dr. Bertagnolli graduated from Princeton University and attended medical school at the University of Utah. She trained in surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) and was a research fellow in tumor immunology at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. From 2007-2018, she served as the Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology for the BWH and the Dana-Farber Brigham Cancer Center. Dr. Bertagnolli has a background in laboratory work focusing upon understanding the role of the inflammatory response in epithelial tumor formation. Dr. Bertagnolli has had numerous leadership roles in multi-institutional cancer clinical research consortia. From 1994-2011, she led gastrointestinal correlative science initiatives within the NCI-funded Cancer Cooperative Groups, where she facilitated integration of tumor-specific molecular markers of treatment outcome into nation-wide clinical cancer treatment protocols. From 2010-2022, she served as the Group Chair of the Alliance for Clinical Trials in

Oncology, a nation-wide NCI-funded clinical trials group. During this time she was also the Chief Executive Officer of Alliance Foundation Trials, LLC, a not-for-profit corporation that conducts international cancer clinical trials. She is a past President and Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and has served on the Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society and the Prevent Cancer Foundation.

Dr. Billy Bozza, PhD joined the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Development Center at the National Cancer Institute in January of 2021. He serves as a Program Director, managing a portfolio of oncology startups (SBIR & STTR awardees) to facilitate small businesses in technology commercialization for cancer diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Bozza is currently leading the Center's efforts on the Small Business Concept Award for early-stage high risk/high reward technologies that are targeting rare and pediatric cancers. He is also taking the lead on the Program's Peer Learning and Networking Webinar Series to help SBIR companies learn from peers and facilitate collaboration.

Dr. Bozza received his doctorate in Biochemistry in 2013 from the University of Delaware, where he was trained as an enzymologist. Before joining NCI, he previously served as a Regulatory Scientist at FDA specializing in chemistry, manufacturing, and control (CMC) review of drug applications.

Dr. Alice Chen, MD directs the Developmental Therapeutics Clinic (DTC) at the National Cancer Institute since 2014. Within the DTC, NCI facilitates the discovery and development of new anticancer drugs and drug targets, as well as piloting novel clinical trial designs that can be applied to the development of molecularly targeted agents on a national and international basis. Interested in improving early phase clinical trials, Dr. Chen is leading her 3rd revisions of the Common Toxicities Criteria for Adverse Events (CTCAE)v6 and is a member of the Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid Tumors (RECIST) committee. In the field of precision medicine, she is the co-primary investigator for the largest precision medicine trial, NCI-MATCH, primary investigator for the Molecular Profiling-Based Assignment of Cancer Therapy (MPACT) and mentor for an investigator leading an arm for the ComboMATCH. Her other area of expertise includes molecular markers in liquid and tumor biopsies, rare tumor and sarcoma, leading as the primary investigator for several multicenter sarcoma studies testing immunotherapy and new novel agents. Dr. Chen is also the Chief Specialty Editor for the Frontiers Medicine: Precision Medicine. Her other experiences include nine years as Senior Investigator at the Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program (CTEP), DCTD, NCI handling a portfolio in DNA repair and antiangiogenic agents. She has authored over 180 manuscripts and made presented by invitation to major oncology meetings internationally on early phase clinical trials, precision medicine, DNA repair and CTCAE. She has received 12 NIH/NCI Director Awards for her work in oncology.

Dr. Martha Donoghue, MD is the Associate Director for Pediatric Oncology and Rare Cancers in the FDA's Oncology Center of Excellence, Office of the Commissioner and the Acting Associate Director for Pediatric Oncology in the Office of Oncologic Diseases, Center of Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER). In these roles, she oversees the implementation of pediatric regulations designed to facilitate the timely investigation of drugs and biological products for pediatric patients with cancer, supports and promotes consistency of regulatory work relating to pediatric oncology drug development across CDER and the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), and works with stakeholders to address challenges and foster development of drugs to treat pediatric and other rare cancers.

Areas of special interest include the use of innovative clinical trial designs and use of real world data to optimize drug development for rare cancers. Prior to joining FDA in 2009, Dr. Donoghue completed a fellowship in Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at the Children's National Medical Center after working for several years as a general pediatrician in private practice. She received her medical degree from Emory University and completed a residency in general pediatrics at the Georgetown University Medical Center.

Dr. Elizabeth Ottinger, PhD, is the Acting Director of the Therapeutics Development Branch (TDB) in the National Center of Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She manages both the Therapeutics for Rare and Neglected Diseases (TRND) and the Bridging Interventional Gaps (BrIDGs) programs that provide in-kind resources to help researchers translate molecules from the bench to bedside.

Over the past 13 years, she has led multiple collaborative projects involving public-private partnerships to advance small molecules and biotherapeutics through pre-clinical and early clinical development for the treatment of rare and neglected diseases. Currently, TDB is managing the preclinical development for the Platform Vector Gene Therapy (PaVe-GT) program, a platform to improve the accessibility of AAV gene therapies and accelerate drug development for rare diseases with small numbers of patients. She has also been actively involved in establishing partnerships with rare disease patient advocacy groups to facilitate the clinical development of therapeutics.

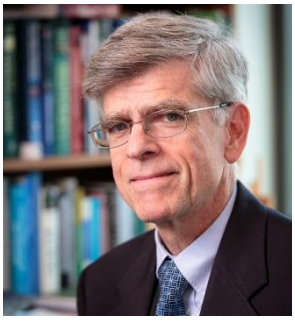
Jim Palma is Executive Director of TargetCancer Foundation. Since joining TargetCancer Foundation in 2010, Mr. Palma has overseen its growth from a small start-up to a nationally recognized foundation supporting comprehensive rare cancer research programs and patient support services. Prior to joining TargetCancer Foundation, he spent eleven years at Fidelity Investments in Boston, MA. Mr. Palma is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD), and is a founding Co-Chair of the NORD Rare Cancers Coalition. In addition, he is a Steering Committee member at the GI Cancers Alliance and the Global Cholangiocarcinoma Alliance. Mr. Palma completed studies at the Institute for Nonprofit Management and Leadership at the Questrom School of Business at Boston University, and received his BA from Loyola University Maryland.

Dr. Karlyne Reilly, PhD is the Director of the Center for Cancer Research (CCR) Rare Tumor Initiative in the National Cancer Institute (https://ccr.cancer.gov/) and is co-leading MyPART (My Pediatric and Adult Rare Tumor network, https://www.cancer.gov/pediatric-adult-rare-tumor/). Her research focuses on malignancies associated with Neurofibromatosis type 1, using model systems to better understand cancer drivers and genetic modifiers of cancer development. You can follow the work of MyPART and the Center for Cancer Research Pediatric Oncology Branch @NCI_CCR_PedOnc.

Dr. Reilly received her PhD in molecular and cellular biology from Harvard University and trained as a post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Cancer Research of MIT, where she held fellowships from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the AACR-Sidney Kimmel Foundation, and the American Cancer Society. She came to the CCR in 2002 and established the Genetic Modifiers of Tumorigenesis Group. She was appointed director of the Rare Tumors Initiative in 2016.

Dr. Jay Schneekloth is a senior investigator in the Center for Cancer Research Chemical Biology Lab at the National Cancer Institute. His research involves using synthetic chemistry and high throughput chemical biology approaches to develop chemical probes of RNA, with a particular emphasis on targeting RNA with druglike small molecules.

Dr. Schneekloth received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College in 2001 where he worked with Professor Gordon Gribble. He then moved to Yale University and obtained a PhD from the chemistry department with Professor Craig Crews in 2006. As a graduate student he studied natural product total synthesis and developed the first cell-permeable PROTAC molecules. He then pursued an NIH postdoctoral fellowship with Professor Erik Sorensen at Princeton University where he worked on the development of a new multicomponent reaction and the application of this reaction to the synthesis of analgesic natural products. He returned to Yale in 2009 where he worked as a medicinal chemist at the Yale Small Molecule Discovery Center, before joining NCI in 2011.



Dr. Malcolm Smith, MD, PhD is Associate Branch Chief, Pediatrics, in the Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program (CTEP), NCI. Dr. Smith has been a member of CTEP since 1990 and during his years at CTEP has focused on developing NCI's preclinical and clinical research programs for children with cancer. Dr. Smith serves as the Program Director and primary NCI liaison to childhood cancer researchers in the Children's Oncology Group (COG), focusing primarily on hematologic malignancies and brain cancers. He also serves as the Program Director for the Pediatric Early Phase Clinical Trials Network (PEP-CTN), the Pediatric Brain Tumor Consortium, and the Pediatric Preclinical in Vivo Testing (PIVOT) Program. Dr. Smith is a co-leader of the NCI Moonshot Fusion Oncoproteins in Childhood Cancers Implementation Team and a member of the NCI Moonshot Pediatric Immunotherapy Implementation Team. Dr. Smith is the author or co-author of more than 230 research articles and 25 book chapters related to childhood cancer research, and he serves on the NCI PDQ Pediatric Editorial Board.

Dr. Marc Theoret, MD is a medical oncologist and serves as Deputy Director in the Oncology Center of Excellence (OCE), FDA, and Acting Supervisory Associate Director of Oncology Sciences in the Office of Oncologic Diseases (OOD), Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, FDA. Dr. Theoret earned his medical degree from the Penn State College of Medicine. He completed internship and residency training in Internal Medicine at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, and fellowship training in Hematology and Oncology at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Bethesda. While a medical student as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute-National Institutes of Health (NIH) Medical Student Research Fellow and subsequently during fellowship training, he performed basic and translational clinical research in the Surgery Branch, NCI, to investigate novel immunotherapeutic strategies to treat patients with melanoma and other advanced solid tumors. In 2009, Dr. Theoret came to FDA and served as medical officer in the Division of Biologic Oncology Products and then in the Division of Oncology Products (DOP) 2. He served as the Clinical Team Leader of the Melanoma-Sarcoma team, DOP2, from 2013 to 2017. Subsequently, he served as Associate Director of Immunotherapeutics in the Office of Hematology and Oncology Products (OHOP) as well as an Acting Associate Director of Immuno-oncology Therapeutics in the Oncology Center of Excellence. Prior to his current position as Deputy Director in the OCE, he served as the Acting Deputy Office Director in OOD. In these roles in OHOP / OOD and OCE, Dr. Theoret has led the reviews of numerous breakthrough therapies, new molecular entities, and novel biologics. Dr. Theoret has contributed extensively to initiatives—regulatory, scientific, and policy efforts—in cancer therapeutic development, in particular immuno-oncology therapeutics, and consistently has provided FDA leadership in this field to wide-ranging external stakeholders.

Dr. David Weinstock, MD joined Merck/MSD in January 2022 as the Vice President of Discovery Oncology and is based in Boston. In that role, he leads the global preclinical effort to develop novel agents for patients with cancer. Dr. Weinstock was previously the Lavine Family Professor at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, a Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, and a National Cancer Institute Outstanding Investigator. He completed fellowship training in Medical Oncology and Infectious Diseases at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. He joined the staff of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital in 2008, where he saw patients as a medical oncologist and directed a translational research program focused on novel therapeutics for lymphoid malignancies.

Panelists

After nearly 25 years as a medicinal chemist at GlaxoSmithKline, **Dr. David Drewry**, PhD is currently a professor in the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy at UNC Chapel Hill. Dr. Drewry's group designs, synthesizes, evaluates, and shares small molecule tools for understudied proteins, with a focus on kinase inhibitors. One key output from the team is the Kinase Chemogenomic Set (KCGS), a set of narrow-spectrum kinase inhibitors available for other labs to screen in disease relevant phenotypic assays in order to identify kinase vulnerabilities. Dr. Drewry's team is part of the Structural Genomics Consortium (SGC) and is dedicated to open science. Their goal is to use their medicinal chemistry expertise to create and then share small molecule tools that help elucidate the function of understudied proteins and by doing so accelerate the drug discovery process. Dr. Drewry has a keen interest in the rare cancer chordoma and one project in his lab is design and synthesis of small molecule ligands for the transcription factor brachyury, a key driver and vulnerability of chordoma. All output from the brachyury project is shared in order to catalyze further interest and investment in this target.

Dr. Sarah Glass, PhD is Chief Operating Officer at n-lorem Foundation. Dr. Glass received her PhD in Molecular Genetics at Ohio State University where she trained in rare inherited cancer syndromes. She has over 20 years of experience in clinical development and research across academia, pharmaceutical companies, and CROs. Dr. Glass brings significant strengths and experience as an accomplished research geneticist, rare disease drug developer, and clinical trialist. She is acclaimed for forging key strategic partnerships across rare disease sectors and has driven efficiencies to decrease patient/caregiver burden in clinical research. Most notably, Sarah combines the professional expertise and training with the perspective of a parent. This allows Sarah to not only personally understand the challenges faced by our patients and their families, but also to translate this understanding into n-Lorem's paradigm shifting platform solution for the ultra-rare community.

Dr. Rachel Harding, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, and a Principal Investigator at the Structural Genomics Consortium (SGC), on open science public-private partnership focussed on early-stage drug discovery. Dr. Harding completed her undergraduate and PhD in structural biology at the University of Oxford, before moving to Toronto for her postdoctoral training where she now runs her independent research program. The focus of Dr. Harding's research is understanding the molecular mechanisms of disease with protein structure-function analyses and developing chemical handles for target proteins to probe their function. In alignment with the SGC open science ethos, no IP is filed for any of Dr. Harding's research.

Dr. Lyn Jones completed PhD studies in synthetic organic chemistry at the University of Nottingham, before starting his postdoctoral research at The Scripps Research Institute, California in chemical biology. He joined Pfizer (Sandwich, UK) as a medicinal chemistry team leader, eventually becoming Director of Chemical Biology and Lead Discovery Technologies. He transferred to Pfizer Cambridge, MA to become Head of Rare Disease Chemistry and Head of Chemical Biology. He then helped establish Jnana Therapeutics as Vice President of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, before moving to his current role as Director of the Center for Protein Degradation at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

Dr. Jones has 25 years drug discovery experience and his research involves the creation and application of chemical technologies to advance emerging therapeutic modalities, including molecular glues and next-generation covalent drugs. He is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Royal Society of Biology, the Royal Society for Public Health, and the Linnean Society, and serves on the editorial board of the journal RSC Medicinal Chemistry and the board of the Medicinal and Bioorganic Chemistry Foundation.

Dr. Andrew W. Lo, PhD is the Charles E. and Susan T. Harris Professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, director of MIT's Laboratory for Financial Engineering, and principal investigator at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. His healthcare-related research interests include: new financial engineering tools and business models for drug and device development and healthcare delivery, especially for rare and ultra-rare diseases; statistical methods for incorporating patient preferences into the drug approval process; predicting clinical trial outcomes via machine learning techniques; and novel reimbursement models for creating a robust gene and cell therapy ecosystem. He is a co-founder and director of BridgeBio Pharma, a director of AbCellera, Atomwise, and Vesalius, a co-founder and chairman of QLS Advisors, and a member of the advisory board to the American Cancer Society's BrightEdge Impact Fund. Dr. Lo received his BA in economics from Yale University and his AM and PhD in economics from Harvard University.

Dr. Peter Marks, MD, PhD is the Director the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) at the Food and Drug Administration. Dr. Marks received his graduate degree in cell and molecular biology and his medical degree at New York University and completed Internal Medicine residency and Hematology/ Medical Oncology training at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. He has worked in academic settings teaching and caring for patients and in industry on drug development and is an author or co-author of over 100 publications. He joined the FDA in 2012 as Deputy Center Director for the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) and became Center Director in 2016. Over the past several years he has been integrally involved in the response to various public health emergencies, and in 2022 he was elected a member of the National Academy of Medicine.

Dr. Anne Pariser, MD is the VP of Medical and Regulatory Affairs at Alltrna, the world's first tRNA platform company seeking to develop tRNA as a therapy that could be used in thousands of genetic diseases. Prior to joining Alltrna, Dr. Pariser was the Director of the Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR) at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), National Institutes of Health (NIH). During her tenure at ORDR, Dr. Pariser oversaw several research and development programs focused on advancing translational and clinical research into rare diseases. Some of these programs included the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN), a network of research consortia focused on more than 200 different rare diseases, the Diagnostic Odyssey grants program intended to speed rare disease diagnosis, and the PaVe-GT gene therapy program, which seeks to develop gene therapies for several ultra-rare diseases at the same time using a platform approach, among other programs. Prior to ORDR, Dr. Pariser worked for more than 15 years at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER), where she predominantly focused on rare diseases drug review and most notably founded the Rare Diseases Program, which focused on developing regulatory science, policy, and processes intended to facilitate rare disease drug development and review. Dr. Pariser received her medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine and completed her Internal Medicine Internship and Residency at Georgetown University Medical Center. She has continued to see patients at the Arlington Free Clinic in Arlington, Virginia USA.

Jimmy Rosen, MBA is CEO of READDI, Inc., a 501(c)(3) spinout from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill created to discover and develop small molecule antiviral drugs. Prior to READDI, Mr. Rosen was President & CEO of Artizan Biosciences, Inc., which was established to develop therapies for microbiome-driven inflammatory diseases, initially targeting Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD: Crohn's Disease & Ulcerative Colitis). Before Artizan's inception, Mr. Rosen spent a dozen years in venture capital, most recently leading the program related venture capital investment function for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. From 2005-2015, he was a Partner on the life sciences venture capital team of Intersouth Partners. Prior to joining Intersouth, he spent 15 years in clinical, research, and financial positions in the health care and biotechnology sectors.

Mr. Rosen's research experience includes programs at the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, the National Cancer Institute, Duke University Medical Center and its Comprehensive Cancer Center. He also managed and monitored clinical trials at a privately held contract research organization, which led to FDA-approved products. Mr. Rosen spent several years as an equity research analyst at Brean Murray & Co., covering biopharmaceuticals, genomics, generics, drug delivery and medical device companies. Prior to his research and Wall Street functions, he spent five years in Emergency Medical Services as a mountain search & rescue and ambulance medic.

Mr. Rosen holds a BA from Duke University and an MBA from UNC-Chapel Hill's Kenan-Flagler School of Business. He received his M.S.P.H. from the UNC School of Public Health. In 2010 Mr. Rosen was awarded the Eisenhower Fellowship for which he designed and executed a program to evaluate the prospects for health care innovation in China and Southeast Asia.

Dr. Angela Shen, MD, MBA is currently Vice President of Strategic Innovation Leaders at Mass General Brigham (MGB) Innovation, and Head of Regulatory at MGB Gene and Cell Therapy Institute. Dr. Shen specializes in translational medicine, clinical development, and regulatory affairs. With over 18 years in the pharmaceutical industry, Dr. Shen has led oncology and rare disease programs through all stages of drug development. Dr. Shen has served as Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at biotech startups like Walking Fish, Arcellx, NKarta, Arvinas, and was acting CMO of Tizona.

At Novartis, Dr. Shen was extensively involved with in-licensing University of Pennsylvania's CAR-T technology. She assembled and led the clinical team responsible for designing and launching the industry's first multi-site, registration CAR-T trial, which resulted in the approval of Kymriah® (CTL019, CART-19) for pediatric patients with relapsed/refractory acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

Dr. Shen earned her BS from Rensselaer's accelerated biomedical program, MD from Albany Medical College in New York, and MBA from NYU Stern School of Business.

Dr. Lou Stancato is an Associate Vice President in Pediatric Clinical Development at Eli Lilly and Company and is a recognized expert in cancer translational research with an emphasis on pediatric cancer. Lou's scientific career began with a B.S. in Cellular and Molecular Biology, followed by a Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Michigan. Prior to joining Eli Lilly and Company, he was an Intramural Research Training Award Fellow at the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the National Institutes of Health, twice receiving the NIH Fellows Award for Research Excellence. Dr. Stancato joined Eli Lilly and Company in 1997 and has nearly 26 years of industry research experience, spanning the continuum of drug discovery and development. His team's research underpins much of Lilly's pediatric cancer clinical portfolio, notably Verzenio, Cyramza and the AuroraA inhibitor. In 2020, Dr. Stancato joined Lilly Pediatric Development and is a leader in pediatric oncology and immunology drug development, advocating for safe and novel clinical trial designs to ensure the best possible care for our youngest patients.

Proudly representing Lilly's pediatric cancer research interests around the globe, Dr. Stancato is a prominent figure in the pediatric cancer community. In 2016, he became the coleader along with Dr. Stefan Pfister (University of Heidelberg) of an Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 project in the EU (http://www.imi.europa.eu/) to develop a preclinical pediatric proof of concept network to identify potential new medicines for children with cancer (ITCC-P4; http://www.itccp4.eu/). This 30-member consortium is comprised of many of the EU's top pediatric cancer centers along with scientists from Amgen, AstraZeneca, Bayer, Charles River Labs, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, PharmaMar, Roche, Sanofi, Servier, and Lilly and has created the world's largest pediatric cancer research platform to support the identification and development of innovative and life-saving medicines for our youngest patients. Dr. Stancato also serves on the Industry Advisory Council for CureSearch, is a member of the Industry Advisory Board for the Harper Cancer Research Institute at Notre Dame and is a Senior Editor for Molecular Cancer Therapeutics.

As chief of NCI's Pediatric Oncology Branch, **Dr. Brigitte Widemann** oversees and active basic, translational and clinical research program for children and young adults with hematologic and solid malignancies.

Dr. Widemann joined the NCI in 1992 as a pediatric hematology oncology fellow after having obtained her MD and completed pediatric residency at the University of Cologne in Germany. Her research has been focused on drug development and early clinical trials for children with refractory solid tumors or genetic tumor predisposition syndromes, in particular neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1). The work of her research team on NF1 resulted in the first U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved medical therapy, the MEK inhibitor selumetinib, for children with NF1 and inoperable, symptomatic plexiform neurofibroma. Dr. Widemann is also a co-leader of the Cancer Moonshot funded My Pediatric and Adult Rare Tumor (MyPART) network, which aims to advance the understanding of rare tumors and the development of more effective therapies.

Dr. Widemann is a member of the Association of American Physicians and recipient of the AACR-Joseph H. Burchenal Award for Outstanding Achievement in Clinical Cancer Research. She has authored more than 200 original scientific papers, reviews, and book chapters, and has conducted many clinical trials.

Dr. Yixian (John) Zhang, PhD, a seasoned professional in biomedical research and administration, has held multiple roles across academia, industry, and nonprofit sectors. Currently serving as the AACR's Vice President of Research and Grants Administration, he directs innovative research initiatives and manages the AACR Grants Program in collaboration with organizations like Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C).

Before his AACR role, Dr. Zhang served as the Executive Research Director at The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). In this capacity, he oversaw LLS's research grants portfolio, evaluating academic research proposals, identifying promising technologies, and fostering collaboration with key opinion leaders in hematologic malignancies. His leadership accelerated the advancement of novel therapies and provided crucial scientific guidance for funded projects.

Dr. Zhang's industry experience encompasses his role as Vice President of Biology at Belrose Pharma, where he contributed to pipeline planning, drug delivery optimization, and competitive intelligence. Earlier, as the Head of Pharmacology at Enzon Pharmaceuticals, he played an instrumental role in IND filings and lead candidate selection for multiple cancer targets.

His journey began at Wyeth Research (now Pfizer), where he spent a decade as a Principal Research Scientist and Team Leader in the Oncology Department. Dr. Zhang holds a bachelor's degree in organic chemistry from Shanghai University and a doctoral degree in biochemistry from the University of Texas Medical Branch. He became an instructor after his postdoctoral training at Baylor College Medicine. He was a two-time recipient of the Jeane B. Kempner Award for research excellence and was awarded a US Army Research Fellowship Award while he was a postdoctoral fellow at Baylor College of Medicine. An author of several dozens of peer-reviewed articles and co-inventor on multiple patents, Dr. Zhang is a member of both the American Association for Cancer Research and the American Association of Hematology.