2021-2025

Strategic Plan

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute
of New Jersey
RUTGERS HEALTH

NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center
A Cancer Center Designated by the
National Cancer Institute

Our Mission

Our mission is to accelerate scientific discovery focused on understanding cancer, innovating cancer treatment, and improving cancer prevention; to provide outstanding, novel, and compassionate patient care; to provide evidence-based and culturally informed education to physicians, nurses, researchers, staff, and the community; and to achieve cancer health equity in our state through outreach to and engagement of our extraordinarily diverse communities.

Our Vision

Through our science, our evidence-based actions, our openness, and our respect for those we serve, we will advance cancer-focused research worldwide and reduce the burden of cancer in our catchment area. By engaging with and empowering our exceptionally diverse populations, and addressing their questions and fears, we will engender hope for cancer patients and their families and play a critical role in strengthening the fabric of our communities by gaining and protecting their trust and providing access to the outstanding oncology care each person deserves.

Our Core Values

1

Curiosity and Discovery

encouraging an environment of continuous inquiry, creativity, and innovation to generate new knowledge

2

Integrity

earning the trust of those we serve and each other through honesty, transparency, accountability, and continuous reflection

3

Collaboration

approaching all opportunities with an understanding that together we are better and can achieve more; promoting and maintaining an environment of teamwork and shared knowledge

4

Cultivating Diversity

making conscientious efforts in all we do to ensure that our leadership, scientists, clinicians, supporting staff, and trainees reflect the rich diversity of the state of New Jersey and the patient populations and communities we serve

5

Respect and Caring

consistently demonstrating caring, compassion, and respect through our words and actions

6

Perseverance

maintaining an unwavering commitment to our mission; embracing change, overcoming obstacles, and creating and recreating the path to achieve our goals

A Message from the Director

I am delighted to share with you the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey strategic plan. Crafting this plan required extensive collaboration, a platform for multiple viewpoints, and the direct input of many of our faculty, staff, and community representatives, acquired through the careful work of more than a dozen focus groups. As the state's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, it is our mission to advance our most visionary science and translate that science into interventions for patients and populations without delay. This plan is critical to ensuring that we achieve this aim.

While this plan acknowledges our commitment to providing the most innovative and comprehensive care to our patients, it is primarily focused on our research, education, and outreach goals; the detailed plan that focuses on the care of our patients can be found in a separate document that addresses our collaboration with the RWJBarnabas Health Oncology Service Line and will physically culminate in a new, state-of-the-art Cancer Center that will bring together the mission areas of research, education, and patient care under one roof.

Within this strategic plan, you will see the goals and objectives we believe will enable us to achieve our vision. To provide the best possible guidance, the strategic plan will be a living document, revisited and adapted to nimbly address extraordinary research opportunities, the evolving needs of our catchment area, and unforeseen challenges. Progress will be regularly assessed by internal leadership, external advisors, and the communities that we serve.

In this plan you will find our roadmap toward achieving our goals:

- To conduct exceptional, innovative, and collaborative research that reflects scientific vision, and strives to make an impact on our catchment area - the state of New Jersey;
- To offer a robust and accessible portfolio of interventional and non-interventional cancer clinical trials;
- To expand and enhance community outreach and engagement and reduce cancer health disparities throughout New Jersey;
- To provide training and career enhancement opportunities with broad-based multidisciplinary perspective and a commitment to building diversity and cancer health equity;
- To increase satisfaction and retention of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey faculty and staff;
- To maintain and enhance our researchers' access to technology, centralized intellectual and technical resources, and essential technical support that will drive innovative cancer research;
- To establish ourselves as international leaders in the fields of biomedical informatics and investigative research;
- To develop, implement, and lead a multi-pronged effort to ensure diversity within the faculty, scientific members, trainees, and staff of the cancer center; and
- To prepare the center for future operational stability and growth

We have a unique opportunity to build upon our tremendous strengths in metabolism research and clinical immunology and become national leaders in cancer metabolism and immunology. Over the course of the next five years, we will work towards determining how modulating metabolism can drive the anti-cancer immune response, resulting in clinical trials and access to new and improved treatments.

In addition, we will deepen our consortium relationship with Princeton University. Year after year, there are unique opportunities for collaborations that accelerate cancer research. This year, a new branch of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research was launched. Based at Princeton University, the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research-Princeton Branch will be wholly dedicated to the study of cancer metabolism. Combined with Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research's leadership in cancer epigenetics and immunotherapy, advances in cancer metabolism generated at the Ludwig Princeton Branch will inform new strategies for cancer prevention and treatment. The clinical translation of Branch discoveries will be conducted in the tri-state area, including in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and RWJBarnabas Health. Over the course of the next five years, we will develop a more sophisticated understanding of cancer metabolism and its promise for the optimization of cancer prevention and therapy.

I am excited to embark on the journey outlined in this strategic plan and look forward to keeping you apprised of our progress.

Sincerely,

Steven K. Libutti, MD, FACS
Director, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Senior Vice President, Oncology Services, RWJBarnabas Health
Vice Chancellor, Cancer Programs, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences

Goal 1

Conduct exceptional, innovative, and collaborative research through Research Programs that reflect scientific vision, demonstrate excellence, and strive to make an impact on our catchment area

To achieve this goal, Rutgers Cancer Institute will:

Continue to establish itself as a national leader in metabolism and immunology research

In collaboration with its research consortium partner Princeton University, Rutgers Cancer Institute is considered a foremost authority in the study of metabolism – the ability of cells to use nutrients and energy for sustenance – and how it contributes to cancer. Immunotherapy – a class of treatments that harness the body's own immune system to fight cancer — has recently produced significant advances that are revolutionizing cancer treatment. Despite this progress, the most pressing challenge for cancer researchers is to understand why some people respond to immunotherapies and others do not. While the altered metabolism of cancer cells drives tumor growth, it may also hold the key to enabling a patient's immune system to recognize and eliminate cancer.

Therefore, over the next five years, we will leverage our expertise in the area of cancer metabolism and expand our efforts in immunology exploration, focusing significant effort to determine how tumor metabolism drives growth and suppresses the immune response, resulting in clinical trials and access to new and improved treatments. We will accomplish this by:

- Recruiting outstanding scientists
- Developing shared resources
- Expanding our collaborations with industry and academia
- Supporting collaborative research to help scientists better understand the human immune response to cancer and ultimately develop the foundation for new treatments or make existing therapies more effective

Increase our impact on cancer research through our consortium relationship

Princeton University is a global leader in disciplines of critical importance to the study of cancer, including basic cancer research in biology, genetics, and metabolism, as well as the computational and physical sciences. This expertise is an ideal complement for the research of the Rutgers University faculty within our cancer center. The longtime alliance between Rutgers Cancer Institute and Princeton University provides an incredible foundation and body of work for important contributions to cancer research. We will increase the impact of the consortium on cancer research by:

- Collaborating on the following studies integral to the new Princeton University Branch of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research: metabolic interactions between the tumor and the rest of the body, focusing on how the body supports tumor growth and metastasis, and how tumors induce cachexia; dietary strategies for the prevention and treatment of cancer; and the interplay of host metabolism, the gut microbiome and the anti-cancer immune response
- Seeding innovative collaborations through targeted research project awards
- Recruiting faculty in areas of synergy between Princeton University and Rutgers University
- Expanding shared resources that support investigators throughout the consortium

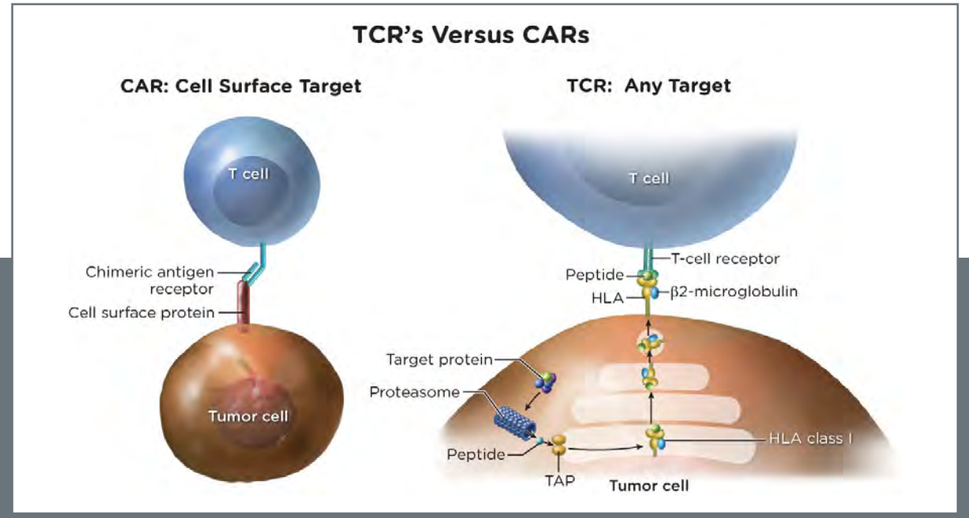
Enhance the impact of the five Research Programs

"Rutgers Cancer Institute's Research Programs work independently and in collaboration to advance cancer care beyond the future. Researchers within these Programs include resident faculty as well as those throughout Rutgers University and consortium partner Princeton University, and their work spans basic, clinical, translational, and population science research. Yet across these diverse research backgrounds, there is the singular focus of finding new ways to treat and cure cancer."

—Eileen White, PhD
Deputy Director, Chief Scientific Officer, and Associate Director for Basic Research

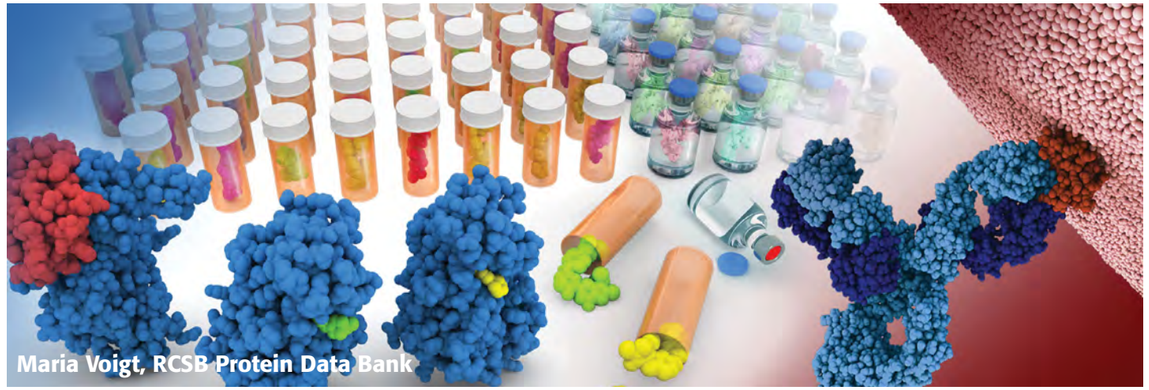
Cancer Metabolism and Growth

- The goal of the Cancer Metabolism and Growth (CMG) Research Program is to determine how oncogenic alterations regulate tumor cell metabolism, growth, proliferation, survival, and tumor-host interaction to facilitate disease progression. The ultimate aim is to identify new approaches to improve cancer treatment through innovative biochemical, molecular and biological research. In vivo approaches to address metabolic, physical and immunologic functions in cancer are a nexus of research within the Program. Development and application of state-of-the-art measurement of cancer metabolism is a signature Program feature that spans the Rutgers/Princeton consortium. The Program provides the platform for productive, collaborative, and impactful science, and interfaces with the Cancer Center for the translation of that science, both bench-to-bedside and bedside-to-bench.



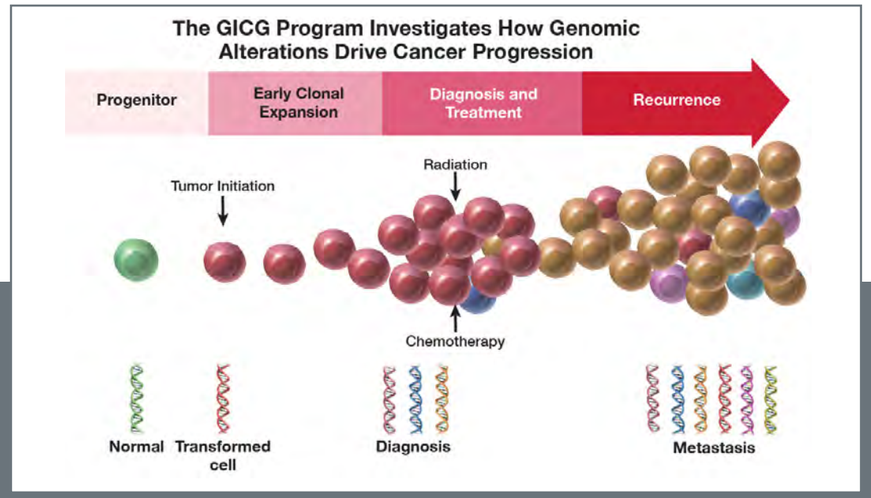
Cancer Pharmacology

- The goal of the Cancer Pharmacology (CP) Research Program is to discover and develop more effective cancer treatments through pharmacology-based preclinical research. The guiding principal is that a fundamental understanding of the biology of molecular targets in cancer is key for discovering and developing innovative therapeutic strategies and for overcoming drug resistance.


Maria Voigt, RCSB Protein Data Bank

Genomic Instability and Cancer Genetics

- The goal of the Genomic Instability and Cancer Genetics (GICG) Research Program is to determine how cells maintain the integrity of their genomes, to define the landscapes of cancer genomes, and to facilitate the identification of biomarkers and therapeutic targets. The research and collaboration activities are organized around the central concepts that cancer results from the accumulation of genomic alterations, and that well-defined descriptions of DNA repair mechanisms, cancer genomes, and gene expression landscapes can reveal the vulnerability of cancer to interventions.

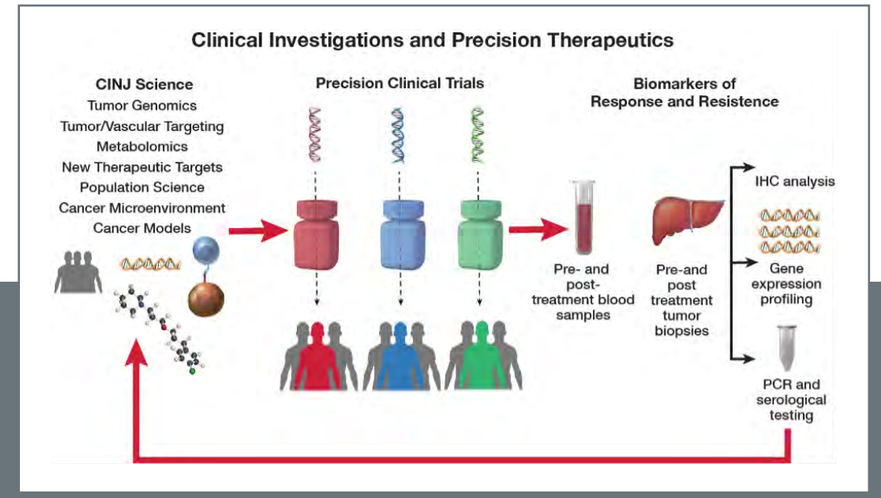


Cancer Prevention and Control

- The goal of the Cancer Prevention and Control (CPC) Research Program is to engage in scientific discovery across the cancer control continuum (e.g., primary prevention to survivorship) that translates into empirically-based interventions, clinical and public health practice, and policy strategies to reduce the cancer burden in New Jersey and beyond.

Clinical Investigations and Precision Therapeutics

- The overall goals of the Clinical Investigations and Precision Therapeutics (CIPT) Research Program are to translate outstanding science into early phase trials, to develop new diagnostic, prevention, and therapeutic strategies and to promote bidirectional translation from bench-to-bedside and back. This bidirectional translation of basic science discoveries and reverse translation of clinical findings is facilitated by collaborations with the Cancer Metabolism and Growth (CMG), Genome Instability and Cancer Genetics (GICG), and Cancer Pharmacology (CP) Research Programs. Translation of population science is facilitated by collaboration with the Cancer Prevention and Control (CPC) Research Program.



Each of these unique Research Programs will continue their successful strategies to further enhance their impact, including:

- Conducting program meetings and other programmatic activities
- Increasing numbers of major grants, high-impact publications, and inter- and intra-programmatic collaborations
- Expanding research related to specific cancers and oncology-related challenges relevant to the catchment area
- Fostering translational research - "bench-to-bedside" and/or "bedside-to-bench" research
- Enhancing collaboration within the Rutgers University/Princeton University consortium

The Research Programs will also pursue initiatives specific to their unique areas of research; a limited set of such initiatives includes:

- Cancer Metabolism and Growth - Expand immuno-oncology research
- Cancer Pharmacology - Engage faculty and trainees in quantitative medicine
- Genomic Instability and Cancer Genetics - Engage computational biologists to help build tools for precision medicine
- Cancer Prevention and Control - Enhance involvement in public health policy
- Clinical Investigations and Precision Therapeutics - Enhance academic radiology at the Cancer Center

Goal 2

Offer a robust and accessible portfolio of interventional and non-interventional cancer clinical trials that is facilitated by a strong and efficient infrastructure and addresses our catchment area priorities, and optimize accrual of patients onto these trials

To achieve this goal, Rutgers Cancer Institute's clinical research leadership will work closely with the RWJBarnabas Health oncology service line to achieve the following objectives:

- Continually evaluate and evolve a clinical trial portfolio that meets the needs of our diverse patient populations throughout our catchment area
- Enhance the mechanisms by which Rutgers Cancer Institute encourages, enables, prioritizes, and financially supports high-impact investigator-initiated trials
- Increase cancer clinical trial accrual through improved patient awareness, facilitation of access, and participation promotion
- Increase the number of cancer-focused physician scientists and clinical researchers at the center who will have a clinical trial focus
- Ensure a robust cancer clinical trial infrastructure to support increasingly complex and growing number of trials, which are accessible throughout the RWJBarnabas Health oncology service line
- Add microbiome-related investigations to the clinical trials portfolio
- Become a national leader in multi-center trials
- Increase innovative precision medicine and cellular therapy trials based on science occurring at Rutgers Cancer Institute

Rutgers Cancer Institute will continue to innovate the trials available for our patients. Promising advances in immunotherapy are transforming the way researchers and oncologists think about cancer and treat it. Rather than targeting the cancer itself, immunotherapy redirects the body's own immune system to recognize and attack the disease. In the past decade, this novel treatment has helped many patients with previously untreatable cancer live longer and even be cured. However, it doesn't work for everyone.

Rutgers Cancer Institute researchers seek to harness the power of immunotherapy. To that end, we will implement research that aims to improve the application of immunotherapies for cancer treatment, increase the rate of response, and make these therapies more widely available.

"Participation in a Clinical Trial will offer you *tomorrow's* treatments today.

As the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey together with our RWJBarnabas Health partners will provide patients access to a wide range of clinical trials close to home. Many of which are not available elsewhere.

These state-of-the-art trials are offered at Rutgers Cancer Institute in New Brunswick and across the state at the RWJBarnabas Health hospitals."

—Howard S. Hochster, MD
Associate Director, Clinical Research
Director Clinical Oncology Research,
RWJBarnabas Health System

Precision Medicine

"Precision medicine is an approach to deliver the most appropriate treatments based on the analyses of the genetic characteristics of cancer. Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey has been at the forefront of such cutting-edge science since 2013, even before the launch of a bipartisan national precision medicine initiative in 2015. "In recent years we have learned that cancers that arise in one organ, such as breast cancer or lung cancer, are not just one disease, but rather a collection of distinct diseases with varying responses to different treatment strategies. We therefore need to examine many features of each cancer to better classify it and identify effective treatment."

—Shridar Ganesan, MD, PhD
Associate Director for Translational Research, Chief of Molecular Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute, Omar Boraie Chair of Genomic Science

Goal 3

Provide exceptional oncology care, offering patients the most advanced treatments and technologies with unparalleled expertise, compassion, and respect

Leadership at Rutgers Cancer Institute and the RWJBarnabas Health System work together to craft, implement, and monitor progress on the plan, that includes the following objectives:

- Provide patients with the most cutting edge approaches to managing their cancer, with subspecialty expertise in medical, surgical, radiation, gynecologic, and pediatric oncology
- Provide patients with access to clinical research trials
- Ensure that the care of every patient is coordinated by a nurse navigator
- Ensure that the patient experience is optimized through patient engagement and satisfaction initiatives
- Expand referrals to Rutgers Cancer Institute - New Brunswick, for innovative, specialized care for rare or complex cases, and expand referrals to RWJBarnabas Health for outstanding evidence-based care for more routine cancer cases
- Become a destination site for the treatment of rare tumors (e.g., neuroendocrine tumors)
- Hold system-wide tumor boards and educational offerings to continue to raise the standard of oncology care throughout the state
- Build and operationalize a Cancer Center that integrates inpatient and outpatient care and services in a state-of-the-art facility

Goal 4

Expand and enhance Community Outreach and Engagement and reduce cancer health disparities throughout New Jersey

In partnership with the New Jersey State Department of Health, Rutgers Cancer Institute is home to the New Jersey State Cancer Registry and the New Jersey Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program of the National Cancer Institute. SEER is an authoritative source of information on cancer incidence and survival in the state, which routinely collects data on patient demographics, primary tumor site, tumor morphology and stage at diagnosis, first course of treatment, and conducts follow-up for vital status. The SEER Program is the only comprehensive source of population-based information that includes stage of cancer at the time of diagnosis and patient survival data. This partnership enables the cancer center to be well-informed of the cancer burden of its catchment area.

"Rutgers Cancer Institute's catchment area is the entire state of New Jersey. Part of our mission is to advance the achievement of equitable access, improved health care quality, and better outcomes across the cancer continuum—prevention, early detection, treatment, survivorship, and end-of-life care—through research, education and training, community engagement and outreach, and public policy advocacy. This mission reflects our responsibility for making an enduring impact, our commitment to partnership and community engagement, and our charge to respond to our catchment area's cancer burden and community identified needs.

Through our strong relationships with our community partners and collaborators, we touch the lives of thousands of New Jersey residents, as well as achieving great success with providers and health care organizations. We offer special thanks to our Community Cancer Action Board members, whose insights, commitment, advocacy and energetic leadership truly make a difference in the lives of the people we serve."

—Anita Kinney, PhD, RN, FAAN, FABMR
Director, Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence, and Associate Director for Population Science and Community Outreach

The Rutgers Cancer Institute Community Partnerships - North

Bergen County (12 Locations)
- 8 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization
- 1 Library
- 1 NJ CEED Agency/ Public Health Department
- 1 NJ QuitCenter

Essex County (56 Locations)
- 21 Community Organizations
- 9 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 5 Hospitals
- 5 Schools
- 3 Libraries
- 3 Public Health Departments
- 2 Faith-Based Organization
- 2 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 2 Governmental/Public Sector Organizations
- 1 NJ CEED Agency
- 1 NJ QuitCenter
- 1 Performing Arts
- 1 Urban Farm

Hudson County (20 Locations)
- 11 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 3 Libraries
- 2 Hospitals
- 2 NJ QuitCenters
- 1 Community Organizations
- 1 Public Health Department

Morris County (20 Locations)
- 11 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 3 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 2 Hospitals
- 2 Public Health Departments
- 1 Community Organization
- 1 Primary Care Provider

Passaic County (11 Locations)
- 6 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 2 Community Organizations
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization
- 1 NJ Quit Center
- 1 Public Health Department

Sussex County (8 Locations)
- 3 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 1 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization
- 1 Hospital
- 1 Library

Warren County (5 Locations)
- 2 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 1 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- 1 Hospital
- 1 Public Health Department

The Rutgers Cancer Institute Community Partnerships - Central

Hunterdon County (3 Locations)
- 2 Community Organizations
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization

Mercer County (39 Locations)
- 12 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 8 Community Organizations
- 3 Governmental/Public Sector Organizations
- 3 Libraries
- 2 Hospitals
- 2 Insurance Companies
- 1 Consulting
- 1 Faith-Based Organization
- 1 Health Coalition
- 1 NJ CEED Agency
- 1 NJ QuitCenter
- 1 Pharmaceutical Company
- 1 Professional Association for FQHCs in NJ
- 1 Public Health Department
- 1 Public Health Management and Consulting

Middlesex County (56 Locations)
- 18 Community Organizations
- 12 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 5 Hospitals
- 4 Schools
- 3 Libraries
- 3 Governmental/Public Sector Organizations
- 2 NJ QuitCenters
- 2 Public Health Departments
- 1 Educational and Social Programs
- 1 Faith-Based Organization
- 1 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- 1 HUD Property Management Company
- 1 NJ CEED Agency
- 1 Primary Care Provider
- 1 Tobacco Dependence Program

Monmouth County (27 Locations)
- 10 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 7 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 4 Hospitals
- 2 Schools
- 1 Cancer Support Services
- 1 Community Organization
- 1 NJ QuitCenter
- 1 Public Health Department

Ocean County (20 Locations)
- 9 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 5 Hospitals
- 3 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization
- 1 Library
- 1 NJ Quit Center

Somerset County (11 Locations)
- 3 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 2 Community Organizations
- 2 Governmental/Public Sector Organizations
- 1 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- 1 Hospital
- 1 NJ Quit Center
- 1 Public Health Department

Union County (24 Locations)
- 7 Community Organizations
- 6 Governmental/Public Sector Organizations
- 6 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 3 Hospitals
- 1 Faith-Based Organization
- 1 NJ Quit Center

The Rutgers Cancer Institute Community Partnerships - South

Atlantic County (15 Locations)
- 5 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 4 Libraries
- 2 Community Organizations
- 2 Hospitals
- 1 Disability Services
- 1 NJ QuitCenter

Burlington County (15 Locations)
- 6 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 5 Primary Care Providers
- 1 Community Organization
- 1 Faith-Based Organization
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Org.
- 1 NJ CEED Agency

Camden County (17 Locations)
- 6 Primary Care Providers
- 3 Community Organizations
- 1 Disability Services
- 1 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- 1 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 1 Hospital
- 1 Library
- 1 NJ CEED Agency
- 1 Public Health Department
- 1 Regional Health Hub

Cape May County (13 Locations)
- 6 Libraries
- 2 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 1 Community Organization
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization
- 1 Healthcare Provider Organization
- 1 NJ CEED Agency; Public Health Department
- 1 NJ QuitCenter

Cumberland County (21 Locations)
- 9 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 6 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 2 NJ QuitCenters
- 1 Community Organization
- 1 Governmental/Public Sector Organization
- 1 Hospital
- 1 NJ CEED Agency

Gloucester County (21 Locations)
- 5 Healthcare Provider Organizations
- 2 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- 1 Hospital
- 1 NJ CEED Agency
- 1 Public Health Department

Salem County (8 Locations)
- 2 Community Organizations
- 1 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- 1 Healthcare Provider Organization
- 1 Hospital
- 1 NJ CEED Agency
- 1 NJ QuitCenter
- 1 Public Health Department

"Connecting clinical, academic research and empowering and inspiring members of communities to get involved to address health inequality has momentum. The compassion the Community Cancer Action Board team has for listening and believing that the answers are in the community gives hope that the cancer burden will be reduced."

—Dorothy Reed
Chair, Community Cancer Action Board

"The community can retain its identity, customs, and cultures, and we can promote a safe way to learn and engage with our contribution to diminish health inequities, disparities, and implicit bias."

—Harry Garcia
Community Cancer Action Board Member

The full strategic plan for expanding and enhancing Community Outreach and Engagement and reducing cancer health disparities throughout New Jersey includes a breadth of objectives and strategies; the following are selected examples:

- Foster interdisciplinary and community-engaged research addressing cancer health equity in populations suffering disproportionate cancer burdens, particularly underserved and minority populations
- Ensure patients' needs are met beyond diagnosis and treatment; identify and address their unique life challenges
- Through the Community Cancer Action Board, promote community participation and bi-directional engagement in the design and implementation of education, research, and dissemination of evidence-based cancer prevention and control guidelines and policies driven by the Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
- Identify and engage priority communities to increase cancer prevention and early detection and respond to community needs
- Identify participation gaps and barriers among diverse populations (race, ethnicity, geography, age, sexual identity, socioeconomically disadvantaged, etc.) in cancer clinical research; develop strategies to counter misconceptions regarding clinical trials, and promote understanding of clinical trials as potentially optimal cancer care options
- Assimilate and leverage existing data resources (e.g., ScreenNJ, New Jersey State Cancer Registry, community-based organizations, insurance claim data) and community partnerships to facilitate the evaluation of and access to community sub-populations for the development of catchment area relevant research community-based interventions
- Provide opportunities for mentoring and leadership development, locally and nationally, through increased networking opportunities with colleagues of senior faculty
- Strengthen the pathway of scholars, spanning post-secondary students to faculty and community-based public health practitioners, who are trained in promoting cancer health equity
- Influence local, state, and national policy rooted in evidence-based guidelines and strategies to achieve cancer health equity. Identify, strengthen, and build relationships between Rutgers Cancer Institute and policy stakeholders at every level (municipal, county, state, business, industry, non-government organizations, community organizations, and payors) within New Jersey to effectively implement cancer health equity policies and plans

Goal 5

Contribute to the evolution of investigators in cancer-related basic, clinical, computational, population, and catchment area relevant science, by providing training and career enhancement opportunities with broad-based multidisciplinary perspective and a commitment to building diversity and cancer health equity

Rutgers Cancer Institute will achieve this goal through the following objectives:

- Offer programs and processes to train the next generation of basic, clinical, computational, and population researchers and the broad-based student population with special emphasis on trainees from underrepresented groups
- Pursue and promote resources available to train the next generation of basic, clinical, computational, and population researchers and the broad-based student population with special emphasis on trainees from underrepresented groups
- Enact a series of training programs and sessions to engage mentors and trainees on catchment area relevant research, building diversity, and promoting cancer health equity
- Provide Rutgers Cancer Institute supported seminars, conferences, and retreats
- Working with the Associate Director for Faculty Affairs, provide state-of-the-art career enhancement opportunities to Rutgers Cancer Institute junior faculty
- Develop a plan(s) to engage Princeton University in research training on all levels

"The outstanding faculty as well as state-of-the art resources as a Comprehensive Cancer Center are central to the Cancer Education and Career Enhancement initiatives. We are committed to promoting inclusivity and increasing diversity across the continuum of academic levels to train the next generation of a diverse biomedical, cancer workforce."

—Edmund C. Lattime, PhD
Associate Director for Research and Education Affairs

"I'm grateful for the excellent quality of training I've received at Rutgers Cancer Institute and commitment of the professors. They inspired me to consider new and innovative ways to combat cancer."

—Arvin Yang, MD, PhD
Chief Medical Officer at Mersana Therapeutics

"My time at Rutgers Cancer Institute as a research assistant afforded me the opportunity to increase my scientific acumen. I was able to work alongside amazing researchers who investigated the p53 gene. I am very appreciative as a student of color to have participated in this type of research and hope that more students like myself have the same opportunity."

—Ronald Gibson
Continuing Umbrella for Research Experience participant, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School medical student, class of 2025

Goal 6

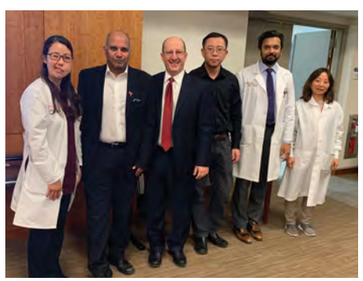
Increase satisfaction and retention of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey faculty and staff

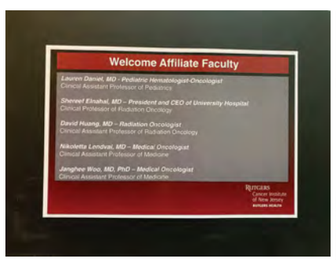
Rutgers Cancer Institute will achieve this goal through the following objectives:

- Develop and administer both a faculty satisfaction and a staff satisfaction survey; report on data collected from these surveys to the Rutgers Cancer Institute Officers Cabinet
- Engage faculty and staff (e.g., convene focus groups) in addressing the issues and opportunities that are revealed through the assessment processes
- Establish and implement a communication plan to keep the leadership, faculty, and staff apprised of: the opportunities and challenges identified; plans to address these challenges; and opportunities and progress toward increasing faculty and staff satisfaction

"To better inform faculty recruitment, retention, and diversification initiatives, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey has undertaken a wide ranging survey of current faculty to understand their perceptions and experiences with all aspects of their roles at the Cancer Institute. A multidisciplinary working group has been established to analyze the data that have been collected and to identify actionable items to improve the faculty experience and to enhance faculty productivity."

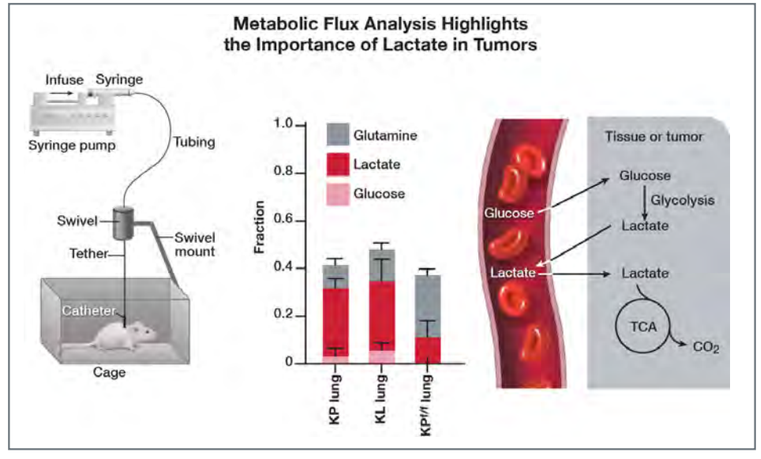
—David A. August, MD
Associate Director, Faculty Affairs





Goal 7

Maintain and enhance Shared Resources, instrumentation, and services that provide researchers with access to technology, centralized intellectual and technical resources, and essential technical support that will drive innovative cancer research



Innovative Science Conducted by the Metabolomics Shared Resource

To accomplish this goal, Rutgers Cancer Institute will achieve the following objectives:

- Maintain administrative oversight processes that routinely gather data to assess the functionality of each Shared Resource
- Enact administrative actions intended to maximize the performance and service of the Shared Resources for the research program members
- Maximize the research impact of each Shared Resource through establishing and enacting action plans created to address the unique needs of each Shared Resource
- Assess developing Shared Resources for determination of their potential status as fully established Shared Resources, followed by providing the infrastructure and support needed to make them successful
- Create a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) facility

GMP Facility

Rutgers Cancer Institute will operationalize a facility for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) production of cell products and other biologic materials for safe human administration to patients. The facility will be renovated, equipped, and recommissioned. A GMP Director and operating staff will be hired and trained. Operating processes including quality assurance will be instituted. Release assays will be developed and implemented. The adjacent GMP Process Development laboratory will be staffed, equipped, and activated. Together, these advances will establish a robust infrastructure for delivery of first in human cell therapy and other biologic treatments to patients at Rutgers Cancer Institute.

Goal 8

Establish Rutgers and RWJBarnabas Health as international leaders in the fields of biomedical informatics and investigative research by leveraging multidisciplinary and multi-institutional talent

To accomplish this goal, Rutgers Cancer Institute will achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance collaborative efforts between the clinical and bioinformatics research communities (from computer science, computational biology, engineering, and medicine through collaboration across departments, institutes and institutions including our NCI research consortia partner Princeton University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology and the private sector) to innovate and create new technologies, ranging from high-resolution diagnostic imaging to high-throughput molecular analysis
- Utilize advanced computing technologies to evaluate the vast amount of data generated through medical imaging, genomics, and clinical outcomes reporting
- Recruit investigators who are, or create opportunities for investigators to be, cross-trained in several disciplines and who can integrate well with physicians and scientists in order to identify and resolve challenges that require highly complex computational solutions
- Facilitate innovation and resolve the key obstacles and challenges facing cancer center researchers, e.g., fundamental problems in cancer detection, patient stratification, disease management, and outcomes studies
- Develop new strategies for advancing team science by enhancing the capacity of our institution to aggregate and analyze the growing clinical, genomic, and population data sets, and establish successful medical informatics and data analytics capabilities and training programs while establishing the environment and culture for fostering productive collaborations
- Establish active, productive, bi-directional internships with national laboratories and the private sector to enable trainees and faculty to participate in collaborative research and clinical projects
- Expand the successful informatics training rotations for pathology and radiology residency programs, to include a wider number of clinical subspecialties and direction toward challenges and projects in investigative medicine, imaging, and informatics
- Establish a single, overarching, multidisciplinary Data Governance Council to guide the methods used for gathering, accessing, and sharing the data across Rutgers University and RWJBarnabas Health
- Recruit additional computational and data analytics faculty and technical support personnel including clinical informatics applications specialists needed to advance proposed programs and maintain assets and resources described above

Goal 9

Develop, implement, and lead a multi-pronged effort to ensure diversity within the faculty, scientific members, trainees, and staff of the cancer center

To accomplish this goal, Rutgers Cancer Institute will achieve the following objectives:

- Establish a diversity committee and recruit or appoint a Chief Diversity Officer
- Review current gender/ethnicity profiles of Cancer Center Support Grant leadership and membership to understand the current diversity and inclusion landscape
- Include a member of the diversity committee on each faculty search committee
- Ensure judicious processes to address equity in salary and promotional opportunities
- Ensure a focus on expanding diversity in especially challenging areas of science and technology
- Identify opportunities that can be leveraged via the Rutgers University/RWJBarnabas Health networks, including community outreach and joint recruitment with other departments beyond the health sciences (e.g. economics, law, etc.)
- Identify and implement a set of strategic recruitment practices to engage diverse candidates, including a communications campaign

"Equity in health and health care for our diverse cancer patients can only be achieved through inclusiveness, mutual respect, and the inclusion of multiple perspectives. At CINJ, we are committed to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion to eliminate health disparities for our patients, expand access to opportunity for the scientific community, and propel innovation in cancer research."

—Haejin In, MD, MPH, MBA, FACS, FSSO
Associate Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Goal 10

Prepare the center for future operational stability and growth

To accomplish this goal, Rutgers Cancer Institute will achieve the following objectives:

- Create modifications to the structure and infrastructure of Rutgers Cancer Institute that respond to the new leadership structure and management of the clinical enterprise
- Create a funds flow model that supports Rutgers Cancer Institute's research, academic, outreach, and education missions
- Create a strategic planning paradigm that aligns and optimizes the strategic goals of Rutgers Cancer Institute and the RWJBarnabas Health System
- Ensure that Rutgers Cancer Institute physician faculty are supported to achieve their academic and research goals
- Work with Rutgers University Foundation to increase philanthropic support of the research, outreach, and education missions
- Support pre-award grant and contract development and submission to increase the direct and indirect support of cancer-focused research
- Create a business analytics office to ensure that strategic decisions are based on current, relevant, comprehensive, and accurate data across a number of categories
- Maintain strong relationships with the New Jersey Governor's Office, Health Department, and Legislature to ensure continued and increased state support for New Jersey's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Maintain a Marketing and Communications Office that optimizes information sources and dynamic/opportunistic information to ensure that the stakeholders critical to Rutgers Cancer Institute's success receive information in optimal formats
- Create a succession plan for key leadership positions, including but not limited to, Center Director, Deputy Director, Officers, and Associate Directors
- Ensure the availability of cutting-edge facilities that will accommodate the growth of the Cancer Center

New Cancer Center

RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey are building a new, $750 million state-of-the-art, free-standing Cancer Center in New Brunswick, to be developed, built, and occupied over the next five years. The new Jack & Sheryl Morris Cancer Center will house key outpatient services, including those for chemotherapy and radiation therapy, as well as the major diagnostic modalities, and inpatient cancer services. The space will also feature research laboratories, enabling physician-scientists to more rapidly translate scientific findings from laboratory bench to patient bedside, resulting in clinical assessment, feedback on clinical trials, and collection of research data in a more rapid and direct fashion. This will be New Jersey's first free-standing cancer hospital.

RWJBarnabas HEALTH

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute of New Jersey
RUTGERS HEALTH

NCI
Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center

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