



Dr. Virginia Kaklamani, left, Associate Director of Clinical Research at the Mays Cancer Center, meets with Lara Sanders, a breast cancer patient who is part of a clinical trial. (Photo: Bob Owen /Staff photographer)

## ETHNIC GROUPS UNDERREPRESENTED IN CANCER DRUG DEVELOPMENT

SAN ANTONIO RESEARCHERS ARE TRYING TO CHANGE THAT.

Lauren Caruba, Reporter, San Antonio Express News

*The oncology field has moved forward by leaps and bounds in recent years, a period that many researchers describe as “the golden age” of cancer drug development.*

The litany of new treatments, including high-profile advancements like immunotherapy drugs that harness the immune system to fight cancer, cannot make it to market without being tested and refined in human clinical trials.

But there remains a persistent problem with how clinical trials are run: they enroll only a tiny portion of cancer patients overall, and they don't come close to reflecting the makeup of the general population.

Nationally, just 2 to 3 percent of cancer patients participate in clinical trials, and of those, only about 5 percent are Hispanic, said Dr. Virginia Kaklamani,

a professor of hematology and oncology with the Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio, which is affiliated with MD Anderson.

African-Americans also tend to be woefully underrepresented. According to an analysis published last year in JAMA Oncology, across 230 cancer clinical trials that resulted in federal drug approval, just 3 percent of participants were black

### ENROLLING IN CLINICAL TRIALS

Patients who are interested in enrolling in a clinical study should speak with their treating physician, who can provide a referral to a trial site.

Patients can also search for all trials related to their particular disease by visiting [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov).

*Continued on next page*

NEWSLETTER 2.13.20

 **SCAM ALERT  
NOTIFICATION**  
DEA Registrants Targeted

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reports that faculty, physicians, providers, pharmacies, researchers and other members of the public have been targeted by criminals posing as DEA agents.

**Please be aware that this scam has been attempted within our organization.**

In some instances, the caller may claim to be an employee with the Texas Medical Board (TMB) and/or the DEA. These callers will often “spoof,” or display fake phone numbers so the call appears to be coming from a certain agency on the recipient's caller ID. These scammers may also use official-looking letterhead, or during phone conversations, use official titles claiming to be an employee of TMB or DEA.

Please be aware that the Texas Medical Board nor the DEA would contact a DEA registrant\* and threaten to suspend a registrant's DEA registration or demand money.

If you are contacted by a person purporting to work for DEA demanding a payment, seeking money or threatening to suspend a registrant's DEA registration, submit the information [here](#).

For more information, contact your local DEA Field Office, which may be found [here](#). You may also contact the Registration Service Center at 800-882-9539.

To read more about this scam: click [here](#).

\*A DEA registrant number (DEA Registration Number) is an identifier assigned to a health care provider (such as a physician, physician assistant, optometrist, dentist, or veterinarian) by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration allowing them to write prescriptions for controlled substances.

Those disparities, and lagging national patient enrollment, are driving a marketing campaign by the cancer center to publicize the importance of clinical trials, which are critical to advancing the field.

The campaign aims to recruit 20 percent of the center's patients from San Antonio and the South Texas region for studies of all cancer types. That would be double the current level. Social media blasts, digital advertising and media interviews are part of the campaign, which began late last year.

The local effort has taken on greater urgency as researchers project a major increase in cancer rates among Latinos in the U.S., even as it is already that group's leading cause of death. That demographic could see a 142 percent increase in cancer cases from 2010 to 2030, according to "[Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos](#)," an open source book based on a conference of the same name that was hosted by Mays Cancer Center in 2018.

Many non-white groups, including Hispanics, are more susceptible to developing certain rarer types of cancer. They also tend to be diagnosed at later stages, something experts attribute to insufficient preventative screening and guidance on reducing their cancer risk, along with cultural and economic hurdles.

As a National Cancer Institute-designated center, Mays receives federal funding and must meet rigorous standards for research, medical care and the quality of its scientific faculty and leadership. The center currently runs more than 180 clinical studies and often partners with other cancer centers for its work.

A lack of diversity in clinical trials, while not a new problem, has important medical implications. Drugs may not have the same effect on different populations for socioeconomic, environmental, biological or genetic reasons.

[Continue to read here](#)

Lauren Caruba covers health care and medicine in the San Antonio and Bexar County area. Read her on the free site, [mySA.com](#), and on the subscriber site, [ExpressNews.com](#) | [lcaruba@express-news.net](mailto:lcaruba@express-news.net) | Twitter: [@LaurenCaruba](#)



The *All of Us* Journey traveling exhibit is making a stop at UT Health San Antonio during its national tour. This mobile unit provides the community a hands-on educational experience and builds awareness and excitement about the All of Us Research Program, supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The NIH research program is part of an effort to advance individualized health care by enrolling one million or more participants to contribute their health data.

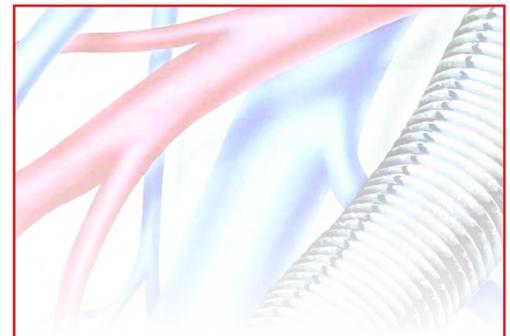
During this event, community members will get the opportunity to learn about the program and to see what other types of research projects are being worked on at UT Health San Antonio.

*All of Us* aims to reflect the diversity of the United States and to include participants from groups that have been underrepresented in health research in the past.

**February**  
**19-20**  
**10 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

**Long Campus**  
**7703 Floyd Curl Dr.,**  
**Parking Lot 6 in front of**  
**Academic & Administration**  
**Building (AAB)**

To learn more about *All of Us* Research program visit:  
[JoinAllOfUs.org](#)



   
**CARDIO RENAL**  
C O N N E C T I O N S

**APRIL 24-25, 2020**  
**LA CANTERA RESORT & SPA**  
**16641 LA CANTERA PARKWAY**

Cardio Renal Connections is a unique meeting bringing together clinicians and scientists to explore the complex relationships between the heart and kidney.

With the epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and aging of the United States population, physicians will continue to face a growing number of patients with renal and cardiovascular disease.

*This is a conference for health care professionals: academic & community physicians, Ph.D.s, nurses, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, dietitians, social workers, residents, fellows, and students.*

Cardio Renal Connections conference presents new scientific research in all areas of cardio renal metabolic disorders including basic, clinical and translational research. The conference is now accepting abstracts. Authors of accepted abstracts will receive free conference registration.

THE [ABSTRACT SUBMISSION](#)  
DEADLINE IS MARCH 15.

# 2020 CANCER RESEARCH APPLICATIONS



## DAMON RUNYON CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

### INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR FELLOWSHIP AWARD

**DEADLINE: MARCH 16, 2020 | 4:00 PM EST**  
APPLICATION MUST BE SUBMITTED [HERE](#)  
(INSTRUCTIONS AND RELEVANT FORMS ARE  
AVAILABLE ON THE SITE)

Offered by the [Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation](#), the Damon Runyon Fellowship Award supports theoretical and experimental research relevant to the study of cancer and the search for cancer causes, mechanisms, therapies, and prevention.

Through the program, awards will be made to institutions for the support of a fellow under direct supervision of a sponsor-scientist (tenured, tenure-track, or equivalent) capable of providing mentoring to the fellow. In addition to aiding in the planning, execution, and supervision of the proposed research, the sponsor's role is to foster the development of the fellow's overall knowledge, technical and analytical skills, and capacity for scientific inquiry. Fellowships are granted for a four-year term, with second-, third-, and fourth-year funding contingent on satisfactory progress reports. In addition, fellows in their first and third years of funding will attend Damon Runyon Fellows' Retreats, which are designed to foster collaboration and interaction between scientists working in different fields relevant to cancer.

[Link to Complete RFP](#)



### INVITES LOIs FOR CANCER RESEARCH

**DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2020**  
(LETTERS OF INTENT)

The [Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation](#) identifies and invests in leading-edge research that demonstrates hope for a cure to childhood cancer.

To that end, the foundation is inviting Letters of Intent for research. Grants will be awarded in one of four categories:

**Basic Research** — Grants of up to \$250,000 per year over multiple years will be awarded in support of basic science, translational, and/or clinical pediatric cancer research initiatives.

**Translational Research** — Grants of up to \$100,000 per year over multiple years will be awarded in support of new research protocols and therapies that hold promise for improved outcomes and accelerate cures from the laboratory bench to the bedside of children and teens with high-risk cancers. Eligible programs include those that involve open, multi-institutional cancer clinical trials or consortia and implement new approaches to therapy.

**Emerging Investigator Fellowship Grant** — Grants of up to \$50,000 per year, renewable annually, will be awarded in support of postdoctoral fellowships and clinical investigator training for emerging pediatric cancer researchers to pursue exciting research ideas. Applicants must have completed two years of their fellowship or not have more than two years as a junior faculty instructor or assistant professor by the start of the award period.

**Letters of Intent are due March 1.** Upon review, selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal by May 31, 2020.

See the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation website for complete program guidelines and application instructions.

[Link to Complete RFP](#)