

Alliance ACS Clinical Research Program Connects Surgeons, Broader Community and Trials



Heidi Nelson, MD



Mitchell C. Posner, MD



Henry M. Kuerer, MD, PhD



Kelly K. Hunt, MD



Stephen B. Edge, MD

The Alliance American College of Surgeons Clinical Research Program (ACS CRP) works to reduce the impact of cancer validating and disseminating strategies for its prevention and treatment, according to Heidi Nelson, MD, Principal Investigator and Director. The program achieves this mission by increasing both surgeon participation in the Alliance and meaningful interactions between the Alliance and the college's cancer programs. The program has four committees that have unique goals and activities, and work together to reach the program's overall research goals.

The Member Services Committee, chaired by Mitchell C. Posner, MD, of University of Chicago, engages a broad oncology community in cancer clinical trials. It works with the Alliance Membership Committee to encourage legacy ACOSOG members to join the Alliance as either main members or affiliates. The committee also

works with leaders of the newly funded ACOSOG Community Clinical Oncology Program Research Base and the Commission on Cancer to recruit new surgeons and community oncologists to the Alliance. Additionally, this committee assists in defining criteria for surgeon credentialing in trials where surgery plays a vital role, and they conduct quality assurance and quality control activities for the Alliance. Surgeons from diverse specialties make up this committee, and ensure that surgical standards meet the broad needs of the Alliance.

Chaired by Henry M. Kuerer, MD, PhD, of MD Anderson Cancer Center, the Education Committee works to reduce the time between trials reporting to practice implementation. Through a coordinated effort, with both the ACS Division of Education and the commission's Education Committee, this committee implements a dissemination program that will increase awareness among clinicians of new trial findings. The

continued on next page

Alliance ACS Clinical Research Program

continued from page 1

committee will develop programs for presentation at national meetings, as well as for written communication vehicles.

When trial results support the introduction of new technologies or techniques, the committee will work with the ACS Division of Education to make optimal use of existing infrastructures, such as the ACS Accredited Education Institutes. Coursework and text that will facilitate clinical trials participation by clinicians and allied health staff will be developed and offered to increase trial participation.

The Cancer Care Standards Development Committee, chaired by Kelly K. Hunt, MD, of MD Anderson Cancer Center, is charged with developing “best cancer practices” and standardizing cancer practices across the Alliance and the college’s cancer programs. The committee has started the process of standardization by collaborating with the cancer programs, including the Commission on Cancer Quality Measures Committee (CP3R). This activity facilitates the integration of ACS standards and accreditation criteria into clinical trials and Alliance standards. One project under way is the coordination of existing ACS Cancer Program standards (including the American Joint Committee on Cancer Staging and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers accreditation standards); existing ACOSOG, CALGB and NCCTG data elements; along with NCI Common Data Elements, into a single data set for the new Medidata Rave clinical trials database. This process will speed the transition of clinical trials results into practice

through common language and common metrics.

The committee also works closely with other ACS CRP committees to evaluate technical standards and surgical assurance and quality control standard operating procedures that have evolved in the context of Alliance cancer trials, with the goal of transferring these procedures into credentialing activities within the college’s cancer programs.

Chaired by Stephen B. Edge, MD, of Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the Research Development Committee will create novel research studies on comparative effectiveness and emerging technologies. Its goal is to facilitate research conducted by the Alliance by providing data essential for optimal study design and accrual strategies. The primary resource for this effort is the National Cancer Data Base (NCDB); however, these data will be supplemented as necessary with other existing data sources. The committee will use these sources to identify care patterns in both common and rare cancer types, which will assist in design of clinical trials and assist the Alliance in identifying institutions with case volumes that permit rapid study accrual.

It is envisioned that the ACS CRP will develop unique research programs, including projects centered on comparative effectiveness research and emerging technology research. The NCDB will serve as a valuable and unique opportunity for the development of a comparative effectiveness research program and for monitoring implementation of new best practices based on clinical trial evidence from the Alliance.

Alliance Investigators Recognized by CTSU



Kendrith M. Rowland, MD



Daniel J. Walsh, MD



Alan P. Lyss, MD



Douglas J. Weckstein, MD

Four Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology investigators have been recognized by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) as top-enrolling individual investigators to cooperative group treatment trials through the Cancer Trials Support Unit (CTSU) in 2011.

The investigators include:

- Kendrith M. Rowland, MD, at Carle Foundation, Carle Cancer Center – 24 enrollments; 23 credited to NCCTG
- Daniel J. Walsh, MD, at Altru Cancer Center – 19 enrollments credited to NCCTG
- Alan P. Lyss, MD, at Missouri Baptist Medical Center – 18 enrollments; 13 credited to NCCTG and 5 credited to CALGB
- Douglas J. Weckstein, MD, at New Hampshire Oncology Hematology Associates and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at Londonderry – 16 enrollments; 10 credited to CALGB

Participation in the NCI's cooperative group network through the CTSU is instrumental in helping cooperative group studies reach their accrual goals. Contribution to cutting edge cancer research is a vital part of answering important treatment questions.

Alliance Members on the Move



Daniel Sargent, PhD, was recently elected President-Elect of the Society for Clinical Trials (SCT). The SCT is an international professional organization dedicated to the development and dissemination of knowledge about the design, conduct and analysis of government and industry-sponsored clinical trials and related health care research methodologies. Dr. Sargent will serve as President of the organization next year, and then as Immediate Past President the following year. He is the Ralph and Beverly Caulkins Professor of Cancer Research at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN; Adjunct Professor of Biostatistics; Duke University, University of Iowa, University of Minnesota; and Group Statistician for the Alliance.

Call for Photos / New Alliance Web Site

The new Alliance web site is currently under development. We would like to highlight pictures of our members and institutions in action on the web site. Send in your photos for consideration with a confirmation that all individuals have given their consent for web posting by May 14, 2012 to Jamilah Owens at jowens@uchicago.edu. Also, make sure to include a caption with the location, date, and names of individuals in the photos.

Future Meeting Dates

2012 Group Meeting

June 28-30, 2012
InterContinental Chicago O'Hare
5300 N. River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018
**Registration opens in mid-April*

2012 Fall Expanded Committee Meetings

November 15-17, 2012
InterContinental Chicago O'Hare
5300 N. River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018

2013 Spring Committee Meetings

March 14-16, 2013
InterContinental Chicago O'Hare
5300 N. River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018

For meeting and travel queries,
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For more information on the Alliance
and updates to meeting information,
visit www.alliance-website.org