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CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

# Awards and Prestigious Appointments

Researcher and institution grantees who have received recognition for their  
commitment to fighting cancer.

*For Fiscal Year 2022*

1. On October 18, 2021, Baylor College of Medicine announced the election of Helen Heslop, M.D., to the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Heslop, Director of the Center for Cell and Gene Therapy at Baylor College of Medicine and Interim Director of the Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor, is among 90 regular members and 10 international members announced at the Academy's annual meeting. Election to the National Academy of Medicine is considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service. "Dr. Heslop is a leader in innovative science. Her work is changing the way we treat cancer and improving patient care," said Dr. Paul Klotman, president, CEO and Executive Dean of Baylor. "She also is helping to train future physician-scientists, and we are proud to have her leadership at Baylor." Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Heslop received a \$1.57 million CPRIT Multi-Investigator, Academic Research grant (RP110553-C1) in March 2011.

2. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, elected two researchers from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to its newest class of AAAS Fellows in November 2021. Juan Fueyo, M.D., professor of Neuro-Oncology and Director of Neuro-Oncology Experimental Research, was chosen for his innovative conceptualization of Delta-24, a novel tumor-selective oncolytic adenovirus to treat recurrent glioblastoma and brain metastases. Victor Prieto, M.D., Ph.D., Department Chair, Department of Pathology and a professor, Departments of Pathology and Dermatology, was selected for his seminal contributions to molecular biology of melanocytic neoplasms, discovery of biomarkers for prognostication, evaluation of therapy response in patients with cutaneous neoplasms and standardization of pathology reporting. The tradition of electing fellows by their peers to recognize invaluable contributions to science and technology dates to 1874. With the addition of Drs. Fueyo and Prieto, MD Anderson's faculty now includes 48 AAAS Fellows. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center received a \$990,000 CPRIT Academic Research grant (RP170066) in November 2016 in support of Dr. Fueyo's work.

3. The University of Texas Health Innovation in Cancer Prevention Research Training Program announced the 2021-2022 fellows on January 6, 2022. Four students from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, are among the recipients: Joseph DeCunha (Medical Physics Program); Taylor Halsey (Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Program); Ruoyu Wang (Genetics and Epigenetics Program); and Mikayla Waters (Biochemistry and Cell Biology Program). The UTHealth-CPRIT Innovation in Cancer Prevention Research Training Program recruits junior doctoral and postdoctoral scholars from the Schools of Bioinformatics, Public Health, and Biomedical Sciences and other UTHealth institutions to ask important questions, apply the tools of innovative thinking and cutting-edge research methods, engage in trans-disciplinary teams, tackle cancer disparities, and move the field of cancer prevention forward. MD Anderson Cancer Center received a \$4 million CPRIT Research Training grant (RP210028) in May 2021.

4. The National Academy of Inventors (NAI) announced the election of Zhiqiang An, Ph.D., professor and Director of the Texas Therapeutics Institute of the Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine at McGovern Medical School, to a fellowship on January 11, 2022. Dr. An earned this distinction for his innovative academic drug discovery program at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. The NAI Fellows Program highlights academic inventors who have demonstrated a spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development, and the welfare of society. Election to NAI Fellow is the highest professional distinction accorded solely to academic inventors. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and Dr. An have received three CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP150230, RP150551, RP190561) in 2015 and 2019 for a total of \$12 million.

5. On January 19, 2022, four prestigious cancer-fighting centers announced a collaboration to research and battle a deadly form of lung cancer, non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), with the support of two non-profit organizations, The Happy Lungs Project and RETpositive. The newly appointed leaders are Steven Artandi, M.D., director of the Stanford Cancer Institute; John Heymach, M.D., Ph.D., Chair, Department of Thoracic Oncology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Justin Gainor, M.D., Director of the Center for Thoracic Cancers at Massachusetts General Hospital, and Alexander Drilon, M.D., Chief of the Early Drug Development Service and medical oncologist at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. The Happy Lungs Project is a 501c3 public charity whose mission is to support researchers and clinicians in finding a cure for RET Positive NSCLC, while providing helpful information to empower patients in their own journey and healing. RETpositive is a patient-driven support and advocacy group that aims to improve the quality of life and extend life expectancy for RET-positive cancer patients. In February 2020, CPRIT awarded a \$756,000 Individual Investigator grant (RP200150) to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in support of Dr. Heymach's research.

6. On January 26, 2022, the Multicancer Early Detection (MCED) Consortium announced the appointment of CPRIT Chief Scientific Officer Michelle Le Beau, Ph.D., as chair. "Given the novelty of this innovative approach to cancer screening and early detection, MCED tests will require a tremendous amount of collaboration to define the promise, where they are suitable, and where there are limits for patients," said Dr. Le Beau. "The impact of these technologies may be far reaching and complex, so involving a wide variety of stakeholders will be critical." In addition to the Consortium's founding members, dozens of organizations across the health care continuum have joined or are preparing to join the Consortium.

7. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, elected Yong Li, Ph.D., professor of medicine in epidemiology and population science, Baylor College of Medicine, to its newest class of AAAS Fellows on January 26, 2022. Dr. Li, a CPRIT Scholar, was awarded for developing novel strategies for understanding mechanistic processes influencing gene expression, including effects from microRNA, exposure to environmental toxicants and their interactive effects with genetic factors on cancer development. His recent work illuminates the intersection between environmental exposure and genetic variants on tissue-specific cancer development. The Baylor College of Medicine recruited Dr. Li from the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR190043) in May 2019.

8. The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) honored CPRIT Scholar, Sean J. Morrison, Ph.D., Director of Children's Medical Center Research Institute at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, with the 2022 ISSCR Public Service Award. The prize, announced on February 1, 2022, recognizes the outstanding contributions of public service to the fields of stem cell research and regenerative medicine. "Sean [Morrison] has long been a strong and vocal advocate for the ISSCR," Melissa Little, Ph.D., ISSCR President, said. "As a former ISSCR president as well as chair of the Society's Policy Committee since its inception in 2015, Sean has dedicated extensive time and experience identifying opportunities and challenges facing the global stem cell research community and raising the effectiveness and visibility for the ISSCR's advocacy efforts." UT Southwestern recruited Dr. Morrison from the University of Michigan with the support of a \$10 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1109) in July 2011. He has also acted as the Primary Investigator for four additional CPRIT Academic Research grants.

9. The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology announced that Daniel Leahy, Ph.D., professor of molecular biosciences at The University of Texas at Austin, has been named among its newest class of Fellows on February 8, 2022. Designation as a Fellow recognizes outstanding accomplishments in

research, education, mentorship and service. Dr. Leahy is the first UT Austin faculty member named as a Fellow. He holds the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Regents Chair in Molecular Biology and studies the molecular mechanisms of signaling in the epidermal growth factor receptor and Hedgehog signaling pathways. Dr. Leahy has also helped shepherd successes in UT Austin's new cryo-EM facility, the Sauer Lab for Structural Biology, helping to bring new structural biology talent to the university. UT Austin recruited Dr. Leahy from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR160023) in February 2016.

10. The Texas Medical Center announced the selection of 20 participants for its nine-month cancer therapeutics accelerator on February 9, 2022. The TMC Accelerating Cancer Therapeutics (ACT) initiative, which started in 2019 using CPRIT grant funding, is a nine-month program designed for individual or early-stage startups working in the cancer therapeutics space. The program was designed to enhance training for entrepreneurs working in biotech and drug development programs in Texas. The 20 participants for the accelerator's second nine-month cohort include six startup companies and 18 academic research faculty at institutions from across the state of Texas, which includes 10 CPRIT grantees: CPRIT Scholar Robert Jenq, Ph.D., The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; CPRIT Scholar Wenbo Li, Ph.D., The University of Texas Health Houston; Chun Li, Ph.D., The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Shuxing Zhang, Ph.D., The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Robert Tsai, M.D., Ph.D., Texas A&M University Health Science Center; Yogesh Gupta, Ph.D., The University of Texas Health San Antonio; Ratna Vadlamudi, Ph.D., The University of Texas Health San Antonio; Subhash Chauhan, Ph.D., The University of Texas Health Rio Grande Valley; Xiankai Sun, Ph.D., The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and Jacques Lux, Ph.D., The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. The Texas Medical Center Foundation received a \$5.4 million CPRIT Core Facility Support Awards grant (RP190674) in August 2019.

11. On February 10, 2022, Greehey Children's Cancer Research Institute at The University of Texas Health San Antonio announced their new director, CPRIT Scholar Patrick Sung, D.Phil., effective March 1, 2022. Dr. Sung currently serves as professor and interim chair of the department of biochemistry and structural biology and associate dean for research in the Long School of Medicine. In addition, Dr. Sung co-leads the Cancer Development and Progression Program at the Mays Cancer Center, home to The University of Texas Health San Antonio MD Anderson Cancer Center. He also occupies the Robert A. Welch Distinguished Chair in Chemistry. Dr. Sung is an internationally recognized leader in the mechanistic biochemistry of DNA repair, has authored or coauthored 239 original research papers, and his discoveries have increased our understanding of how DNA can repair damage induced by radiation, carcinogens and other causes. The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio recruited Dr. Sung in May 2018 from Yale University with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators Award grant (RR180029).

12. CPRIT Scholar Bruno Di Stefano, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology, Baylor College of Medicine, received a 2022 Scholar Award from the American Society of Hematology (ASH) on February 17, 2022. One of ASH's most prestigious research award programs, the ASH Scholar Awards support fellows and junior faculty dedicated to careers in hematology research as they transition from training programs to careers as independent investigators. "For researchers, Scholar Awards not only provide vital financial support, but also instill confidence that ASH recognizes their potential to make discoveries of importance to the field," said 2022 ASH President, Dr. Jane N. Winter. Baylor College of Medicine recruited Dr. Di Stefano to Texas with the help of a \$2 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR200079) in August 2020.

13. The International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE) named their newest Fellow, Baohong Yuan, Ph.D., distinguished professor in the Department of Bioengineering, The University of Texas at Arlington, on February 23, 2022. SPIE brings engineers, scientists, students and business professionals together to advance light-based science and technology. SPIE recognized Dr. Yuan for outstanding contributions to developing high-resolution fluorescence imaging technologies in deep tissue. His research focuses on the development of innovative cancer imaging and treatment technologies involved in optical and ultrasound methods. He has published more than 70 peer-reviewed journal papers, presented at numerous conferences and seminars, and filed and received 10 U.S. and international patents. He also earned a National Science Foundation CAREER award. The University of Texas at Arlington and Dr. Baohong Yuan, were awarded two CPRIT Individual Investigator grants (RP120052, RP170564) in 2011 and 2016 for a total of \$2 million.

14. CPRIT Scholar Vicky Yao, Ph.D., assistant professor of computer science at the George R. Brown School of Engineering at Rice University, received a National Science Foundation CAREER Award in March 2022. This prestigious award is granted to fewer than 400 American academics each year who are expected to make significant contributions to their fields of study. With this award comes \$790,000 in funding, which will enable Dr. Yao to continue the development of computational tools and methods to analyze and interpret DNA methylation at Rice University for the next five years. Specifically, Dr. Yao plans to develop machine learning methods and build open-source software to help biomedical researchers analyze DNA methylation, an important biological process by which a methyl group is added to a cytosine, one of DNA's four bases. Rice University recruited Dr. Yao with the support of a \$1.66 million Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members award (RR190065) in August 2019.

15. On March 24, 2022, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center launched the James P. Allison Institute, a visionary research and innovation hub within MD Anderson designed to foster ground-breaking science, to develop new treatments, and to bring the benefits of immunotherapy to all patients. The Allison Institute will advance exceptional discovery, translational and clinical research to integrate immunobiology across disciplines and unlock the full potential of science and medicine for human health. The institute builds upon the legacy of its namesake, James P. Allison, Ph.D., who was awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his fundamental discoveries in T cell biology and his invention of ipilimumab, the first immune checkpoint inhibitor to treat cancer. Together with Dr. Allison, the institute will be led by renowned experts in immunotherapy and cancer research. Padmanee Sharma, M.D., Ph.D., professor, Department of Genitourinary Medical Oncology and Immunology, will serve as scientific director of the Allison Institute, and CPRIT Scholar Raghu Kalluri, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair, Department of Cancer Biology, will serve as director of operations. MD Anderson recruited Dr. Kalluri from Harvard Medical School in 2012 with the support of a \$3.5 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (R1227) and received a \$900,000 CPRIT Individual Investigator grant (RP150231) in February 2015.

16. On April 5, 2022, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) announced that John Sweetenham, M.D., associate director for clinical affairs at the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, has been elected Chair of the Board of Directors. The NCCN is an alliance of 32 pre-eminent cancer centers in the U.S. devoted to patient care, research, and education. Dr. Sweetenham joined The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in 2019 and has been a principal investigator on national and international clinical trials in lymphoma. Most recently, he was co-leader of an international trial that established a new standard of care for patients with Hodgkin lymphoma at high risk of relapse following stem cell transplantation. UT Southwestern and its Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center joined the NCCN in 2020. Its faculty and staff have participated on panels that work to establish guidelines for clinicians on cancer treatment and prevention and to provide information that empowers patients. UT Southwestern received a \$4.1 million CPRIT Multi-Investigator Research Awards grant (RP160661) in August 2016.

17. Rice University researchers will lead a Department of Defense-funded project to improve communications between microelectronics and microorganisms, an advance that would make living sense-and-respond systems possible. The Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI) award for basic research on emerging technologies is a five-year, \$6.25 million grant, to be administered by Rice and shared with collaborators at Tufts University and Virginia Tech University. The Rice project leaders – principal investigator CPRIT Scholar Caroline Ajo-Franklin, Ph.D., professor of biosciences, and co-principal investigators Jonathan Silberg, Ph.D., professor of biosciences and Rafael Verduzco, Ph.D., associate chair of chemical and biomolecular engineering – are developing electrobiology techniques that promise to make connections between electronics and cells faster and more efficient. Developing the first project – an electrobiology system that senses and degrades environmental pollutants in real time – will involve multiple disciplines. “This work will provide foundational knowledge and capabilities to create microelectronics interfaced with microorganisms that neutralize threats to humans or the environment in real time,” Dr. Ajo-Franklin said. Rice University recruited Dr. Ajo-Franklin from Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in November 2019 with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR190063).

18. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the NCCN Foundation announced seven recipients for the 2022 NCCN Foundation Young Investigator Awards Program on April 25, 2022. These early-career investigators from NCCN Member Institutions represent tomorrow’s leaders for advancing cancer care. One of the seven honorees, Chad Tang, M.D., assistant professor, completed his residency in radiation oncology in 2017 at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. CPRIT recognized Dr. Tang’s prowess, awarding him and MD Anderson a \$1.5 million CPRIT Early Clinical Investigator Award grant (RP200669) in 2020. His clinical interests are in the treatment of patients with genitourinary malignancies and with image-guided conventional external beam radiation therapy, proton therapy, stereotactic body radiation therapy, and brachytherapy. His research interests are in translational and clinical trials for both genitourinary malignancies and in the utilization of radiation in conjunction with new molecularly targeted agents for the treatment of metastatic disease.

19. Researchers at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center’s Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center are developing an innovative interface to make the wealth of genomics data from next generation sequencing visible and actionable in real time for clinicians and researchers. A \$300,000 grant from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network will support the design and implementation of integrated decision tools and an associated workflow to enable users to search tests and relevant diagnoses easily and strategically. UT Southwestern was an early adopter of EPIC’s genomics module, an interface that enables the user to receive NGS data directly from the laboratory doing the test. The goal now is to create a seamless interface with NGS laboratories, so test results integrate into the chart as discrete data – presented in the way that results appear from a blood panel. UT Southwestern Medical Center received a \$3.75 million CPRIT Academic Research grant (RP210041) in May 2021.

20. Yogesh Gupta, Ph.D., Department of Biochemistry and Structural Biology and member of the Greehey Institute, was promoted to associate professor with tenure by The University of Texas Health San Antonio on April 21, 2022. Dr. Gupta has served as co-principal investigator for studies of an enzyme protein that helps osteosarcoma cells to survive and spread in which the team identified a small molecule that can inhibit this activity. The goal was to make this molecule more potent. He is also researching for novel approaches to abolish tumor promoting functions of aberrant/residual BAFs. The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio received a \$200,000 CPRIT High Impact/High Risk grant (RP190534) in August 2019 and a \$1.2 million CPRIT Individual Investigator Research Awards for Cancer in Children and Adolescents grant (RP200110) in February 2020.

21. In April 2022, CPRIT Scholar, Gang Bao, Ph.D., Department Chair & Foyt Family Professor of Bioengineering, professor of chemistry and materials science & nanoengineering at Rice University, and Konstantin Sokolov, Ph.D., a professor of imaging physics at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and an adjunct professor of bioengineering at Rice Nanotechnology, received a prestigious \$2.6 million National Institutes of Health grant. This grant will help train future medical professionals to translate nanoscale structures and devices engineered in Dr. Bao's lab, which have broad-based applications in basic research to understand the underlying causes of disease, as well as in the translation of nano-scale tools for disease diagnostics and treatment, such as targeted drug/gene and cell-based therapies. Dr. Bao was recruited to the Rice University George R. Brown School of Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology & Emory University with the help of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators Award grant (RR140081) in 2014. Since then, Rice University and Dr. Bao have received three additional CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP170721, RP210116, RP220518) in 2017, 2021, and 2022, respectively, for a total of \$5.2 million. MD Anderson and Dr. Sokolov have received two CPRIT Individual Investigator Research Award grants, (RP170314, RP200223) in 2016 and 2020, for a total of \$1.8 million.

22. Jonathan Sessler, Ph.D., professor and R. P. Doherty, Jr., Welch Regents Chair in Chemistry, The University of Texas at Austin, was elected to the prestigious American Academy of Arts & Sciences in April 2022. The Academy has elected and engaged a cross-section of highly talented and brilliant individuals for more than 240 years. Dr. Sessler designs chemical molecules for therapeutic and diagnostic purposes, and his work has resulted in the creation of multiple biotechnology companies and inventions. His work with chemical compounds draws on supramolecular chemistry and porphyrins, chemicals found in the human body. His research has led to a class of experimental drugs called texaphyrins, which can target cancerous tumors. He has received numerous honors and awards in his 38 years as a member of the faculty at UT Austin and has published hundreds of papers, patented dozens of technologies. Dr. Sessler was elected last year to the National Academy of Sciences and in 2015 to the National Academy of Inventors. Since the American Academy of Arts & Sciences' founding in 1780, it has elected such distinguished researchers and scientists as Benjamin Franklin (elected 1781), Charles Darwin (1874), Albert Einstein (1924), Stephen Hawking (1984) and Jennifer Doudna (2003). The University of Texas at Austin and Dr. Sessler have received four CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP101501, RP120393, RP140108, DP150087) in 2010, 2012, and 2014 (2), respectively, for a total of \$6.9 million.

23. Foresight Diagnostics, based in Colorado, announced on April 27, 2022, the appointment of CPRIT Scholar Christopher Flowers, M.D., M.S., to its scientific advisory board. Dr. Flowers currently serves as chair and professor in the Department of Lymphoma-Myeloma in the Division of Cancer Medicine at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and is co-leader of MD Anderson's B-Cell Lymphoma Moon Shot® program. From 2003 to 2019, he served as the director of the lymphoma program at Emory University's Winship Cancer Institute, where he was also professor from 2016 to 2019. Dr. Flowers has received numerous awards and recognitions including the 2016 Woodruff Leadership Academy Award, 2016 Emory University School of Medicine Mentoring Award, and 2016 Woodruff Health Sciences Center Emory 1% Award, among others. He has authored more than 240 publications and has served as a Fellow of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and member of the American Society of Hematology. He was inducted into the American Society of Clinical Investigation in 2016 and the American Association of Physicians in 2022. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center recruited Dr. Flowers in August 2019 from Emory University College of Medicine with the support of a \$6 million CPRIT Recruitment of Established Investigators grant (RR190079).

24. The Texas-Israel Alliance, founded by Israeli businessman Dudi Weissman, is a non-profit organization with a mission to expand economic ties between Texas and Israel. The Alliance brokers strategic agreements,

initiatives, and partnerships, all of which facilitate Texas-Israel economic ties at a macro level and lower the barrier of entry for all. A delegation of the Texas-Israel Alliance, led by Chairman George Seay, visited Israel from April 30-May 7, 2022. The focus of the trip was creating innovation partnerships and connections in the life science and healthcare space. The group visited Rabin Medical Center and the Weizmann Institute as well as VC firms and start-ups. The delegation included representatives from CPRIT, including Wayne Roberts, CEO, and Tracey Davies, Chief Strategic Initiatives and Intellectual Property Officer. Amy Abernethy, M.D., Ph.D., formerly the deputy commissioner of the FDA, also joined the delegation.

25. The Moonshot4Kids Congressional/OSTP Briefing on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, in the Rayburn House Office Building was hosted by DIPG Advocacy Group, The Cure Starts Now, and the Carson Leslie Foundation, with respective leadership giving testimony to the urgent, unmet needs of children with brain cancer. Brain cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death in children in the U.S. and is one of the most poorly funded areas of cancer research considering the population's consistent death toll. H. Res. 404, the DIPG Awareness Resolution, is now in its 7th year in Congress after 4 introductions. The resolution asks that pediatric and high-mortality rate cancers have greater consideration for research grants with public and private funding sources, and that federal funding be increased for pediatric cancer research, drawing direct attention to the challenges of the medical research investment culture to address the needs of children. CPRIT Chief Scientific Officer Michelle M. Le Beau, Ph.D., was among the scientists who gave detailed accounts of their trailblazing activity in creating and funding new research infrastructure and data registries to serve pediatric brain cancer research. Notable expert presenters included Donald William Parsons, M.D., Ph.D., Texas Children's Cancer and Hematology Center, Baylor College of Medicine. Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Parsons received a \$1.2 million CPRIT Individual Investigator Research Awards for Cancer in Children and Adolescents grant (RP170169) in 2016, and three additional CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP101195-P2, RP120685-P1, RP120715-P2) in 2010 and 2012 for a total of \$1.3 million.

26. The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) elected CPRIT grantee, Jeremiah Gassensmith, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at The University of Texas at Dallas, as an RSC fellow of in May 2022. The RSC is the European counterpart to the American Chemical Society. Fellows of the RSC are recognized leaders in the chemical sciences who have made exceptional contributions to the field and are committed to promoting the global value of chemistry. Dr. Gassensmith's research focuses on the intersection of organic and solid-state chemistry, with an emphasis on biomaterials and engineered virus-like particles. His work has applications in the development of vaccines for viral and bacterial infections, new types of contrast agents for use in MRI, and precise methods to deliver therapeutic drugs to the body. In addition to more than 60 published papers, Dr. Gassensmith has seven patents and launched a startup company based on some of his lab's work. The University of Texas at Dallas and Dr. Gassensmith received a \$200,000 CPRIT High Impact/High Risk grant (RP170752) in August 2017.

27. On June 16, 2022, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Invectys, Inc. and the Cell Therapy Manufacturing Center (CTMC), a joint venture between MD Anderson and National Resilience, Inc., announced a strategic collaboration to jointly develop a reliable, compliant and scalable process for human leukocyte antigen (HLA)-G targeted chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy for solid tumors. The collaboration will build upon the HLA-G platform pioneered by Invectys to advance novel CAR T cell therapies through preclinical development with CTMC into early-phase clinical studies at MD Anderson. The collaboration brings Invectys' technology together with the cell therapy development and manufacturing expertise of CTMC and the clinical trials expertise of MD Anderson. Invectys received a \$14.2 million CPRIT Product Development Research grant (DP200034) in May 2020.



28. Zhijian J. Chen, Ph.D., professor of molecular biology and George L. MacGregor Distinguished Chair in biomedical science, and CPRIT Scholar Sihan Wu, Ph.D., assistant professor at the Children's Medical Center Research Institute, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, are part of a team recognized with a Cancer Grand Challenges grant in June 2022. This unique award aims to solve some of cancer's toughest problems by bringing together global teams with diverse areas of expertise. Drs. Chen and Wu, as well as colleagues from the U.S., U.K., and Germany, will be awarded 20 million pounds over five years. These researchers will study more about a phenomenon known as extrachromosomal DNA (ecDNA) – circular pieces of DNA that exist outside of a cell's main DNA bound together in chromosomes. Dr. Chen and Dr. Wu plan to use the funds to better understand whether cGAS detects ecDNA and to discover what mechanisms cancer cells use to evade immune detection. UT Southwestern and Dr. Chen received five CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP110430, RP120718-P3, RP120718-C2, RP150498, RP180725) in 2010, 2012, 2015, and 2018, respectively, for a total of \$11 million. UT Southwestern recruited Dr. Wu in May 2021 from the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research at the University of California, San Diego with the support of a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members grant (RR210034).

29. The Lung Cancer Research Foundation (LCRF) announced on June 27, 2022, that it is expanding its Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) by 11 new members, including CPRIT Scholar Kathryn O'Donnell, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Molecular Biology, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. The LCRF Scientific Advisory Board's primary purpose is to review, evaluate and select lung cancer research proposals worthy of financial investment. In addition, members of the LCRF SAB provide opinion and guidance on relevant lung cancer data. Dr. O'Donnell's current work focuses on understanding the mechanisms that contribute to lung tumor initiation, progression, and metastasis and applying insights from these studies towards the development of new therapies for lung cancer. UT Southwestern recruited Dr. O'Donnell in October 2010 from Johns Hopkins University with a \$2 million CPRIT Recruitment of First-Time Tenure-Track Faculty Member Award grant (R1101).

30. Aravive, Inc. announced the appointment of Robert B. Geller, M.D., as Chief Medical Officer on July 5, 2022. Dr. Geller will play a critical role in progressing Aravive's portfolio of programs in ovarian, renal and pancreatic cancers. Dr. Geller is a medical oncologist with over 30 years of drug development experience leading all aspects of clinical and medical affairs, including commercialization preparedness and launch of novel therapeutics. After over two decades in clinical practice, he then transitioned to the biopharmaceutical industry, where he held positions in medical affairs and clinical development at Alexion, Heron Therapeutics, and most recently as Senior Vice President (Medical Affairs) at Coherus Biosciences where he was involved in the clinical development and successful commercialization of both their biosimilar franchise and their immune-oncology pipeline. Dr. Geller arrives at Aravive as they are nearing completion of their global registrational Phase 3 trial in platinum-resistant ovarian cancer, accelerating the ccRCC development program, and preparing to file their first BLA in the end of 2023. Aravive, Inc. received a \$20 million CPRIT New Company Product Development Award grant (DP150127) in November 2015.

31. On July 29, 2022, the McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, announced that John F. Hancock, M.A., M.B., BChir, Ph.D., Sc.D., has accepted the position to lead the school as Executive Dean and H. Wayne Hightower Distinguished Professor in the Medical Sciences, effective Sept. 1, 2022. Dr. Hancock, the John S. Dunn Distinguished University Chair in Physiology and Medicine, becomes the 10th dean in McGovern Medical School's history. He trained at both the University of Cambridge and the University of London, and previously served as deputy director of the Institute for Molecular Bioscience at the University of Queensland and director of the Australian Research Council's Special Research Center for Functional and Applied Genomics. He joined the McGovern Medical School faculty in 2008 as chair

of the department of integrative biology and pharmacology. Since then, the department has risen to No. 6 in the Blue Ridge Institute national rankings. His own research on the function of RAS proteins has furthered understanding of cancer biology. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and Dr. Hancock received five CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP100483, RP130059, DP150065, RP170233, RP200047) in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2020, respectively, for a total of \$5 million.

32. Valo Therapeutics, the developer of novel, adaptable immunotherapy platforms for cancer and infectious diseases, announced four appointments to its Scientific Advisory Board on August 2, 2022. Malcolm K. Brenner, M.D., Ph.D., professor, Departments of Pediatrics, Molecular and Human Genetics, Baylor College of Medicine, was among the four newly appointed Board Members. Dr. Brenner's primary research interest is the use of gene transfer to augment the immune response to human tumors, using vaccines and adoptive transfer of genetically modified T cells. He served as Editor-in-Chief of Molecular Therapy and as former President of the American Society for Gene and Cell Therapy and of the International Society for Cell Therapy. Dr. Brenner has been involved in the foundation of several companies, such as Allovir, Marker Therapeutics, and Tessa Therapeutics. The Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Brenner have received three CPRIT Academic Research grants (RP110553-P1, RP110553-AC, RP160345) in 2011 and 2015 for a total of \$2.7 million.

33. The National Colorectal Cancer Round Table (NCCRT) announced on August 23, 2022, the addition of seven new NCCRT member organizations, including the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. The NCCRT, established by the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1997, is a national coalition of public organizations, private organizations, voluntary organizations, and invited individuals dedicated to reducing the incidence of and mortality from colorectal cancer in the U.S. Through coordinated leadership, strategic planning, and advocacy, NCCRT's goal is to increase the use of proven colorectal cancer screening tests among the entire population for whom screening is appropriate. The NCCRT is one of the American Cancer Society's six mission-critical national roundtables.

34. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center announced in July 2022 that it has joined with medical centers around the nation to apply advanced sequencing to pediatric brain tumors as part of the National Cancer Institute's new Molecular Characterization Initiative, a subset of the Cancer Moonshot Childhood Cancer Initiative. The goal is to expand the use of biomarker testing for children, adolescents, and young adults with brain and central nervous system tumors to improve diagnoses, advance research, and guide more patients into clinical trials. The 200 participating centers are part of the National Cancer Institute's Children's Oncology Group formed to foster data-sharing and research collaboration. Under this initiative, researchers will apply advanced genetic sequencing and database utilization technologies to test tumor and blood DNA and RNA collected from pediatric patients. "Today's advanced genetic sequencing will enable a rapid growth in the databanks for these diseases, enhancing research efforts to understand what drives these tumors," said Laura Klesse, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of pediatrics who is leading the initiative at UT Southwestern. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center received a \$5.4 million CPRIT Pediatric Cancer Data Core, Core Facility Support Awards grant (RP180805) in August 2018.