



**O'NEAL** COMPREHENSIVE  
CANCER CENTER

**UAB** THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

# COMMUNITY DISSEMINATION INSTITUTE 2024

Harmony in Health: Collaborative Approaches to Research,  
Education & Screening to Achieve Cancer Health Equity

**AUGUST 25-27**

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**The Lodge at Gulf State Park**

21196 East Beach Blvd, Gulf Shores, AL 36542

**PRESENTED BY THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT**





August 25, 2024

Dear Institute Attendees:

Welcome to Community Dissemination Institute 2024. This promises to be a wonderful meeting with an exciting and timely agenda at a spectacular location. We are grateful to the O'Neal Office of Community Outreach and Engagement for their efforts in planning this meeting.

We have an exciting program this year with Dr. Helen Krontiras, the Director of Clinical Affairs for the O'Neal, delivering the keynote address. I also want to draw your attention to the new "speed date with the community" sessions focused on helping O'Neal research faculty better understand the greatest concerns around cancer prevention and care from the members of the communities that we are proud to serve. Understanding these concerns lies at the very foundation of our research, outreach, and cancer care missions.

Let's use the 2024 Dissemination Institute to individually and collectively chart new heights and breadths in our mission: new heights driven by research advances in the cancer risks of greatest concerns to our community and new breadths through programs that make these advances accessible to everyone in our community.

We could not meet our mission without key partners who not only sponsor the Dissemination Institute but work tirelessly to provide new cancer advances to people in our community. We thank all of our sponsors for these important commitments.

As Director, I am proud of the great work of the O'Neal Community Outreach and Engagement Office and the hundreds of committed Community Health Advisors, and I am personally committed to ensuring that the O'Neal integrates the critical conversations and lessons learned during this Institute into serving the citizens of Alabama, the Deep South, and beyond.

Sincerely,



Barry Sleckman, MD, PhD  
Director, O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center  
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Office of the Director 202 Wallace Tumor Institute 1824 6th Avenue South 205.934.5077 <a href="mailto:bps@uab.edu">bps@uab.edu</a> <a href="http://uab.edu/onealcancercenter">uab.edu/onealcancercenter</a>	The University of Alabama at Birmingham Mailing Address: WTI 202 1720 2nd Avenue South Birmingham, AL 35294-3300
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August 25, 2024

Dear Esteemed 2024 Community Dissemination Institute Attendees,

On behalf of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center's Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 Community Dissemination Institute in beautiful Gulf Shores, Alabama!

I am particularly excited to celebrate my one-year anniversary as the Associate Director of Community Outreach and Engagement at this Institute! I am proud to share that this new year also marks a significant milestone for our Office as we proudly host our largest gathering yet. Your presence here underscores our shared commitment to fostering bi-directional communication between the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center and our communities. Together, we aim to bridge gaps, share knowledge, and forge collaborative partnerships that are essential in our collective mission to reduce the burden of cancer and address disparities across Alabama and beyond.

The 2024 Institute promises to be a dynamic platform for sharing experiences, strategies, and insights. It is a space where ideas flourish, partnerships strengthen, and innovative approaches to community engagement thrive. Throughout this Institute, I encourage you to actively participate, engage in lively discussions, and build connections that will propel our collective efforts forward. Together, we will explore new avenues for collaboration, learn from each other's successes, and inspire action that will positively impact the fight against cancer.

Once again, welcome to Gulf Shores! Let us bring forth the harmony of togetherness for progress! Let us harness the energy and enthusiasm of this gathering to advance our shared mission and make meaningful strides towards a future where cancer disparities are a thing of the past.



Timiya S. Nolan, PhD, APRN-CNP, ANP-BC  
Associate Director of Community Outreach & Engagement  
UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center

August 25, 2024

Dear Community Dissemination Institute Attendees,

Welcome to our Community Dissemination Institute 2024. I am so excited about our time together over the next few days. As we embark upon a time of learning, discovering, and sharing, hope you will meet new friends and colleagues who will be the start of something impactful for our communities like never before.

Since 2001, when the first Deep South Network (DSN) Dissemination Institute was held at the Birmingham Marriott with nearly 200 attendees, the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center Community Outreach leaders knew the power and value in bringing together community and academic partners to build our capacity. In fact, an invaluable co-learning experience took place. Though the names and funded programs have changed over the years, from the Deep South Network for Cancer Control in the office of Community Outreach at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center to the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB, at the core of it all is YOU!

YOU, the Community Health Advisors; YOU, our staff and clinician scientists who translate the discoveries into the best quality care possible; and YOU, our partners who know that collaboration is the key to having greater reach. Together, we create *Harmony in Health* through collaborations to improve cancer health disparities and health equity.

As Chair of the Community Dissemination Institute (CDI) 2024 Planning Committee, with a record number of 460 registered attendees, it has been a labor of love to lead this awesome team that contributed harmoniously to bring you an Institute that is engaging and thought-provoking, providing opportunities to build and strengthen our relationships and collaborations. A special thank you to our sponsors and the O'Neal leadership for supporting and investing in this meaningful program.

It is my prayer that the impact of these next 3 days will be life changing. We hope that you leave this place armed with new collaborations to do magnificent work.

Here's to YOU!



Claudia M. Hardy, MPA

Chair, CDI 2024 Planning Committee  
Director, Community and Research Relations  
Office of Community Outreach and Engagement

Office of Community Outreach and Engagement	The University of
240 Wallace Tumor Institute	Alabama at Birmingham
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**Office of Community Outreach and Engagement  
Community Dissemination Institute 2024**

*Theme: "Harmony in Health: Collaborative Approaches to Research, Education and Screening to Achieve Cancer Health Equity"*

**AGENDA**

The Lodge at Gulf State Park

August 25 - 27, 2024

**Sunday, August 25, 2024**

9:30 am - 12:30pm

**Final Pre-Conference Breakfast Meeting**

CDI Planning Committee and The Lodge Conference Team – The Burrow Room

**Sunday, August 25, 2024**

**Facilitator: Mr. Justin Pope**

2:00 pm - 6:45 pm	<p><b>Hotel Check-In - as rooms become available</b></p> <p><b>Conference Registration Opens</b></p>	<p>Hotel Lobby Front Desk</p> <p>Pre-Function Area</p> <p>Conference Center</p>
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	<p><b>Opening Session - Mardi Gras Night</b></p> <p><b>Doors opening at 5:30 pm</b></p> <p><b>White Attire (Optional)</b></p>	<p>The Ballroom</p>
6:00 pm - 6:15 pm	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><b>Greetings</b></p> <p>Dr. Timiya Nolan <i>Associate Director</i> <i>Community Outreach and Engagement</i></p> <p>Dr. Barry Sleckman <i>Director</i> <i>O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center</i></p> <p><b>Presenting Sponsor Greetings: Genentech</b></p> <p>Ms. Meghan McKenzie <i>Patient Inclusion and Health Equity</i> <i>Chief Diversity Office, Genentech</i></p> <p><b>Platinum Sponsors:</b></p> <p><b>Exact Sciences</b></p>	

	<p>Ms. Lauren Newman <i>Healthcare Market Development Leader</i></p> <p><b>Acclinate in collaboration with Merck:</b></p> <p>Ms. Joanie Thompson <i>Community Engagement Consultant, Acclinate</i></p> <p>Ms. Amanda Bishop <i>Associate Director Diversity &amp; Inclusion in Clinical Trials Diversity Program Lead, Merck &amp; Co., Inc.</i></p>	
6:30 pm - 7:15 pm	<p><b>CHA Memorial Tribute</b></p> <p><b>Invocation and Dinner</b></p> <p>Dr. Earl Johnson <i>Madison County CHA</i></p>	
7:20 pm - 7:55 pm	<p><b>CHA Spotlight / Educational Activity</b></p> <p><b>Kahoot: COE Styles</b></p> <p>Ms. Kimberly Parker <i>Sumter County Coordinator</i></p> <p>Ms. Kathy Levy <i>Choctaw County Coordinator &amp; Regional Manager</i></p>	
7:55 pm - 8:00 pm	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Ms. Claudia Hardy <i>Director, OCOE Community &amp; Scientific Relations Community Dissemination Institute, Chair</i></p>	

**Monday, August 26, 2024,**

**Facilitator: Ms. Francine Walton**

6:45 am - 7:15 am	<p><b>Morning Fitness Energizer</b> Demetria Pollard, Facilitator for Journey to Lose <i>Macon County CHA</i></p> <p><b>Morning Glory: An Inspirational Meditation</b> Rev. Angelia Walker <i>Madison County Coordinator</i></p> <p><b><i>Walking Trail and Bike Rentals available on your own</i></b></p>	<p>Conference Center Terrace</p> <p>Dogwood Meeting Room</p>
7:30 am - 8:45 am	<b>Breakfast</b>	The Ballroom









	<p><i>oncology trials from a patient and a research coordinator.</i></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b>  Ms. Meg McKenzie - <i>Genentech</i>  Dr. Dawn Brown - <i>Genentech</i>  Ms. Karla Ross – <i>Breast Cancer Survivor</i>  Dr. Timiya Nolan- <i>UAB O’Neal COE</i>  Anna Wilbanks - <i>Clinical Research Coordinator, UAB</i></p>	
2:30 pm - 3:15pm	<p><b>Platinum Sponsor: Exact Sciences</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Cordie Walker  <i>Grenada County Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Colon Cancer 101</b>  <i>This session will address colorectal health equity and colorectal cancer screening (CRC) in underserved communities including an introduction to the CRC Screening Community Toolkit for local community coordinators to address cancer health equity.</i></p> <p><b>Karina Moyano</b>  <i>Health Equity &amp; Access Senior Manager  Exact Sciences</i></p>	Ballroom 3
2:30pm - 3:15 pm	<p><b>Fall into Healthy Eating: A Cooking Demo</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Pearlette Edwards,  <i>Bullock County Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Chef Glenda Jones</b>  <i>Demonstration on healthy fall meal planning with instructions on how to shop and prepare.</i></p>	Ballroom 1
2:30pm - 3:15 pm	<p><b>Platinum Sponsor – Acclinate</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Nicole Rodgers  <i>Bolivar County Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Diversifying Clinical Research and Increasing Trial Access, Together</b>  Joanice Thompson  <i>Community Engagement Consultant, Acclinate</i></p> <p><i>This session will feature an opportunity to share your stories and experiences related to cancer and work to improve access to clinical research.</i></p>	Dogwood
2:30 pm - 3:15pm	<p><b>Conversation with Cancer Specialists</b>  Facilitator: Dr. Floretta Dortch  <i>Calhoun &amp; Talladega Counties Coordinator</i></p> <p><i>This session will provide an opportunity for</i></p>	Ballroom 3

	<p><i>attendees to have a candid conversation with O'Neal oncologists, nurses and clinical trial leaders about cancer screening and treatment, including clinical trials.</i></p> <p><b>Dr. Bassel El-Rayes</b>  <b>Dr. Burt Nabors</b>  <b>Dr. Erica Stringer-Reasor</b>  <b>Dr. Rebecca Arend</b>  <b>Ms. Ping DeBlasio</b>  <b>Ms. Denise McKenzie</b>  <b>Ms. Ginger Reeves</b></p>	
3:15pm - 3:45 pm	<b>Ice Cream Break</b>	
3:45 pm - 4:30 pm	<p><b>Breakout sessions Round 2</b>  Please select a different breakout session, as the content will repeat</p>	
3:45pm - 4:30pm	<p><b>Presenting Sponsor: Genentech</b></p> <p>Facilitator: Mrs. Debbie Hill  <i>Humphreys County Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Real talk on Research: Patient Equity, Education, and Clinical Trials</b>  <i>Hear directly about how patients gain education and access to studies, importance of community education with the family, and what it's like to be in oncology trials from a patient and a research coordinator.</i></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b>  Ms. Meg McKenzie - <i>Genentech</i>  Dr. Dawn Brown - <i>Genentech</i>  Ms. Karla Ross – <i>Breast Cancer Survivor</i>  Dr. Timiya Nolan- <i>UAB O'Neal COE</i>  Anna Wilbanks - <i>Clinical Research Coordinator, UAB</i></p>	Ballroom 2
3:45pm - 4:30 pm	<p><b>Platinum Sponsor: Exact Sciences</b></p> <p>Facilitator: Ms. Ada Webb  <i>Hale and Greene Counties Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Colon Cancer 101</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Carla Harrell  <i>Shelby and Chilton Counties Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Karina Moyano</b>  <i>Health Equity &amp; Access Senior Manager</i>  <i>Exact Sciences</i></p>	Ballroom 3

	<p><i>This session will address colorectal health equity and colorectal cancer screening (CRC) in underserved communities including an introduction to the CRC Screening Community Toolkit for local community coordinators to address cancer health equity.</i></p>	
3:45pm - 4:30 pm	<p><b>Fall into Healthy Eating: A Cooking Demo</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Gretel Holston  Walker County Coordinator</p> <p><b>Chef Glenda Jones</b>  <i>Demonstration on healthy fall meal planning with instructions on how to shop and prepare.</i></p>	Ballroom 1
3:45pm - 4:30 pm	<p><b>Platinum Sponsor - Acclinate</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Kimberly Braden  Jefferson County Coordinator</p> <p><b>Diversifying Clinical Research and Increasing Trial Access, Together</b>  <i>This session will feature an opportunity to share your stories and experiences related to cancer and work to improve access to clinical research.</i></p> <p><b>Joanice Thompson</b>  Community Engagement Consultant  Acclinate</p>	Dogwood
3:45pm - 4:30 pm	<p><b>Conversation with Cancer Specialists</b>  Facilitator: Ms. Carolyn Duncan  Marengo County Coordinator</p> <p><i>This session will provide an opportunity for attendees to have a candid conversation with O'Neal oncologists, nurses and clinical trial leaders about cancer screening and treatment, including clinical trials.</i></p> <p><b>Dr. Bassel El-Rayes</b>  <b>Dr. Burt Nabors</b>  <b>Dr. Erica Stringer-Reasor</b>  <b>Dr. Rebecca Arend</b>  <b>Ms. Ping DeBlasio</b>  <b>Ms. Denise McKenzie</b>  <b>Ms. Ginger Reeves</b></p>	Ballroom 3
5:00pm - 8:30pm	<b>Dinner on Your Own &amp; Cultural Excursions</b>	
5:15pm - 8:30pm	<p><b>Buses to Foley Outlets</b>  Leaders:  Ms. Gloria Shields</p>	

	<p><i>Yazoo County Coordinator</i>  Ms. Desiree Norwood  <i>Sunflower County Coordinator</i>  Depart at 5:30 pm and return at 8:30 pm</p>	
5:15pm - 8:30pm	<p><b>Buses to The Hangout</b>  <i>Leaders:</i>  Dr. Mackenzie Fowler  <i>COE Evaluation Dir.</i>  Ms. Pearlette Edwards  <i>Bullock County Coordinator</i>  Depart at 5:30 pm and return at 8:30 pm</p>	
5:00 pm - 8:30pm	<p><b>Other Options available at Conference Registration</b></p>	

Tuesday, August 27, 2024,

Facilitator: Lauren Roberts

6:30 am - 7:00 am	<b>Morning Fitness Energizer</b> Demetria Pollard <i>Macon County CHA</i>  <b>Morning Glory: An Inspirational Meditation</b> Rev. Angelia Walker <i>Madison County Coordinator</i>  <b><i>Walking Trail and Bike Rentals available on your own</i></b>	Conference Center Terrace   Dogwood Meeting Room
7:30 am - 8:45 am	<b>Breakfast</b> <b>Check-out of hotel and load luggage on buses (overflow luggage storage: Cypress Room)</b>	The Ballroom
8:45 am - 9:00 am	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	The Ballroom
9:00 am - 9:45 am	<b>Silver Sponsor &amp; National Partner Presentation</b> <i>The Center for Black Health and Equity</i> <b>What's All the Smoke About: Harmful Effects of Tobacco and Cancer Control</b>  <i>This session will provide an overview of the latest tobacco products influencing individuals in underserved communities and the role that The Center is playing to address cancer control in Black Communities.</i> <b>Speakers:</b> Kenny Ray <i>Director of Programs</i> Kimberly Caldwell <i>Tobacco Program Manager</i>	
9:45 am - 10:30 am	<b>Health Misinformation on Social Media</b> James Gilbreath <i>Reference Librarian &amp; Liaison to the UAB School of Public Health</i> <i>This session will provide useful tools on how to use sites to receive credible health information from the internet and social media.</i>	



10:30 am - 11:30 am	<p><b>Lighting Fast Research Topics Early-Stage Investigators</b></p> <p><b>Experimental Therapeutics</b> <i>An Artificial Intelligence Solution for Clinical Trials</i> Dr. Neil Pfister</p> <p><b>Cancer Biology &amp; Immunology</b> <i>Pancreatic Cancer Spatial Neighborhoods' Impact on Therapy and Metastasis</i> Dr. Julienne Carstens</p> <p><b>Neuro-Oncology</b> <i>Novel Alabama Based Immunotherapy for Patients with Newly Diagnosed Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM)</i> Dr. Roxie Lockhart</p> <p><b>Cancer Control and Population Sciences</b> <i>Understanding how social determinants of health influence racial and geographic differences in cancer outcomes</i> Dr. Mackenzie Fowler</p>	The Ballroom
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	<p><b>Closing Remarks, Evaluations and Dismissal</b> Box lunches provided.</p> <p>Dr. Timiya Nolan <i>Associate Director, Community Outreach and Engagement</i></p> <p>Claudia M. Hardy <i>Director, OCOE Community &amp; Scientific Relations Community Dissemination Institute, Chair</i></p>	The Ballroom

Bus Routes	Color	Counties
Bus # 1	Green	Jefferson
Bus # 2	Blue	Dallas, Hale and Butler
Bus # 3	Red	Greene, Sumter, Choctaw and Marengo
Bus # 4	Orange	Madison, Talladega, Calhoun, Walker
Bus # 5	Pink/Fuchsia	Barbour, Bullock and Macon
Bus # 6	Yellow	Mississippi

# SPEAKERS



## Erin Ahn, PhD

Dr. Erin Ahn is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She also serves as a Scientist and a Community Outreach & Engagement (COE) Liaison for the Neuro-Oncology Program at the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Ahn earned her B.S. and M.S. from Seoul National University in South Korea and her Ph.D. from UAB. She completed her postdoctoral training at the University of California San Diego, Moores Cancer Center.

Dr. Ahn's laboratory investigates the molecular mechanisms of gene expression associated with neurodevelopmental disorders and various cancers, including leukemia, glioblastoma, and breast cancer. Her current research particularly focuses on how abnormal RNA regulation leads to cancer progression, therapy resistance, and defective organ development, including brain malformations. Her research team was the first to identify ZTTK syndrome, a rare genetic disease affecting children's mental and physical development. Dr. Ahn is a founding member of the ZTTK SON-Shine Foundation, a patient support group, and actively educates families, clinicians, and researchers worldwide to promote rare disease awareness and research aimed at developing novel therapies for ZTTK syndrome.



## Rebecca Arend, MD, MSPH

Rebecca Arend, MD, MSPH is Associate Professor of Gynecologic Oncology at UAB and an Associate Scientist at the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center Experimental Therapeutics Program. She completed her residency at Columbia Presbyterian in New York, NY and completed her fellowship at UAB. While a fellow at UAB, her review of the Wnt pathway in ovarian cancer became one of the 5 most cited papers in Gynecologic Oncology. Her current basic science pursuits include understanding the role of anti-tumor

immunity in ovarian cancer through Wnt modulation, metabolism, and epigenetics.

Dr. Arend's clinical interests include translational research, targeted therapy, chemoresistance, immunotherapy, and personalized medicine. Numerous Gyn Onc fellows, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, residents, and medical students have trained under her direct mentorship. She has been awarded funding for over five Investigator Initiated trials and has served as both the local and national Principal Investigator on multiple Phase II and III clinical trials. She is the co-chair of UAB's Gyn and Personalized Medicine Disease Oriented Working Groups, the Chair of the CCC Data Safety Monitoring Committee, and the Chair of UAB Tissue Committee. She is also the Co-Translational Science Chair of NRG's Ovarian Committee.



## Katie Barnes, MPA, CPC, FACHE

Katie has most recently served as the Vice President, Cancer service line at Virginia Commonwealth University. She led the cancer team to optimize clinic performance and engage stakeholders to quality optimization, resulting in 19% increased volume and doubling clinical trial accruals to over 200 patients where VCU Massey Cancer Center achieved Comprehensive cancer center designation January 2023 by the NCI. Additionally, she led the construction of a new outpatient cancer center & concurrent Epic go-live in late 2021. Previously Katie served as the Administrator of The Ohio State University Wexner Center and James Cancer Hospital and Comprehensive Cancer Center where she worked to develop and grow the Oncology programs. Under her leadership, the Oncology program has gone through a culture change by developing a collaboration with the staff and helping to promote a culture of mutual respect and professionalism.

Prior to OSU, she worked for OhioHealth and had administrative oversight of system service lines of Anesthesia, Emergency Medicine, Hospital Medicine, Oncology, Orthopedics, Neurology/Neurosurgery, and pulmonology/critical care across thirteen hospitals.

Katie has an MPA from Indiana University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Georgia State University. She is a certified phlebotomist and certified physician coder. She is also a Fellow with the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). Katie is a volunteer with Delta Zeta Sorority. Katie also started a non-profit 501c3 organization for K-12 tutoring, specializing in students with Dyslexia. In her spare time, she enjoys working out and spending time with family.



## Amanda Bishop

Amanda serves as the primary lead developing and overseeing the operational strategy, planning and evaluation of patient diversity for the Women's Cancers therapeutic area. Since joining Merck in 2022, she coordinates collaborations cross-functionally to create clinical trial diversity plans and develops strategies that foster community engagement and outreach. Amanda oversees strategy implementation and progress, sharing best practices to increase representation of diverse participants in Merck clinical trials. She also manages the company's Diversity & Inclusion in Clinical Trials webinar series, bringing rich insight to sites in how to drive diversity in clinical trials.

Amanda has more than 20 years in the clinical research field (Rx & OTC) across several therapeutic areas, including oncology, cardiovascular disease, neuroscience, bone metabolism/inflammation and pain management. Having a heart for philanthropic activities, service projects, and for encouraging youth to pursue the sciences, she is known for helping youth with their science projects and competitions. She is a graduate of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J.

Amanda enjoys ocean sounds and maintains a hopeful outlook.



## Dawn Brown, PhD

Dawn is a Principal Medical Science Liaison at Genentech covering Breast, Gastrointestinal and Gynecological Cancers in Texas. Since joining Genentech in 2016, she has taken on the responsibility of providing clinical expertise in medical research communications to support collaborative interests of KOLs in her region. She has built and cultivated relationships serving as a liaison to internal and external partners that support the discovery and development for life changing medicines in the field of

Oncology. And she serves as the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Lead for her team to drive awareness and education to address health equity and clinical research disparities in support of Genentech's Advancing Inclusive Research initiative.

Prior to joining Genentech, Dawn spent 8 years at Eli Lilly company in various medical roles, as a Research Scientist. There, she also served as a co-lead of a Minority Mentoring program through company sponsored initiatives for the community. Dawn's passion around research and diversity and inclusion activities has afforded her various awards and opportunities to expand her development across the company. Dawn currently resides in Houston, TX and is a foodie who loves grilling on her Traeger, loves new adventures, and loves her family.



## Kimberly Caldwell, MSPH

Kim Caldwell, MSPH, is a program manager at The Center for Black Health & Equity. She oversees and manages the operational activities of The Center's Tobacco & Cancer programs. She also ensures that program goals and objectives are achieved within the specified work plan deliverables, funding limitations, and other requirements. She has over twelve years of systems work with national, state, and local public health partners focusing on tobacco control and racial equity issues. In addition to a master's in science in

public health degree from Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine, she also possesses a bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She is a tobacco treatment specialist trained by the Duke-UNC Tobacco Treatment Specialist program. Kim is passionate about yoga, walking, hiking, and reading a good book; she currently resides in North Carolina.



## Julienne Carsten, PhD

Dr. Carstens earned her PhD from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston Texas in the laboratory of David Spencer, PhD in the Department of Pathology and Immunology, where she studied the cellular and molecular biology of prostate cancer focusing on the tissue crosstalk between cancer cells and their microenvironment. After defending her dissertation, she trained at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, where she completed her postdoctoral fellowship with Raghu Kalluri, M.D., Ph.D. in the Department of Cancer Biology. Her work investigated the specific roles of cancer and microenvironmental cell types play in the progression and metastasis of pancreatic cancer using genetic mouse models and multiplex image analysis.

Her laboratory at UAB continues her previous work in metastatic pancreatic cancer, with the ultimate goal to understand the systemic, tissue, cellular and molecular events that drive pancreatic cancer metastasis and resistance to a broad range of therapies. The lab utilizes novel genetic and transplant mouse and cell line models in combination with multiplex imaging, imaging mass spec and genomic, lipidomic and proteomic analyses in a cross-platform system of discovery and clinical translation.



## Ping DeBlasio, MBA, BSN, RN

I am an enthusiastic clinical research professional with over 17 years of progressive experiences. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing and a degree in Master in Business Administration. Currently, I am the Director of Oncology Clinical Research Operation at the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center.

As an expert clinical research professional, I have extensive knowledge of GCP guidelines and FDA requirements. I have diverse skills including trial administration, monitoring, budget development/negotiation, fiscal management, Investigator's Initiative Trials development and FDA inspection oversight. I have broad therapeutic experiences in Phase I-III Oncology/Hematology and Pediatric rare diseases, including neuromuscular, nephrology, rheumatoid, endocrine and gastrointestinal disorders.

It takes a team to ensure that participating in clinical trials is a positive experience for all patients and their families and that the important scientific questions are answered. I also have proving results in staff training and supervisions, team building, operational efficiency, and organizational management.

It is a privilege to be part of the O'Neal Clinical Research team that is committed to its mission of improving cancer outcomes, one patient at the time.





## **Basil El Rayes, MD**

Dr. El-Rayes completed his medical school at the American University of Beirut (AUB). He subsequently joined the internal medicine residency program at Wayne State University. He completed fellowship in hematology and medical oncology at the D Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute of Wayne State University. After completing his fellowship, Dr. El-Rayes joined the faculty at Wayne State University. During his tenure at Karmanos, Dr. El-Rayes chaired the Data and Safety Monitoring Committee, participated in the Clinical Trial Oversight Committee, and was the Medical Director of the Outpatient Clinic. He then joined Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University in 2009. He served as Vice Chair for Clinical Research of the Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology, Director of the Winship Gastrointestinal Oncology Program, and Associate Director of Clinical Cancer Research. In 2022, Dr. El-Rayes joined UAB as Division Director of Hematology Oncology and Deputy Director of O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. El-Rayes is an NIH-funded physician scientist whose research is focused on translation and early drug development in GI cancer with special emphasis on pancreatic and neuroendocrine cancer. His lab research is particularly focused on targeting the interactions between pancreatic cancer cells and the tumor microenvironment with the overarching aim of reinvigorating the immune system. Dr. El-Rayes has published more than 300 peer-reviewed articles in journals such as Journal of Clinical Oncology, Clinical Cancer Research, and JAMA Oncology. In the clinical research, Dr. El-Rayes has served as principal investigator on several investigator-initiated trials and multi-institutional trials. He has served on several national committees including the NCI Neuroendocrine Tumor Task Force and National Committee of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for the Development of Guidelines for the Management of Central Venous Catheters in Patients with Cancer.



## **Mackenzie Fowler, PhD**

Mackenzie Fowler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health at UAB. She also serves as the Director of Evaluation for the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB. Dr. Fowler's research is heavily influenced by her lived experiences growing up in Florence, AL and observing the gastrointestinal cancer courses of two of her grandparents. Her research is focused on advancing health equity in cancer care and outcomes among older adults across the cancer continuum. She is currently working on projects to understand specifics of disparities among older adults with cancer in Alabama and aims to develop interventions to address these differences in the future.



## James Gilbreath, MLIS

James Gilbreath is a reference librarian with UAB Libraries and is currently library liaison to the UAB School of Nursing. James has over 10 years of experience in academic libraries, and he has been with UAB Libraries since 2022.



## Patricia Gullette, RN, BS

Mrs. Gullette is the Macon County Community Health Advisor Program Coordinator. She is a graduate of Tuskegee Institute/ University with BS in Sociology and received her Associate Degree in Nursing from Kentucky State University Associate Degree in Nursing. She Retired from Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System June -2018 after 38 years of professional Nursing. She is a member of Greater St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church in Tuskegee where she serves as Coordinator of the Health Care Provider

Ministry. In September 2023 she received Community Health Worker Certification; Hobbies include baking, working with flowers and reading.



## Claudia M. Hardy, MPA

Claudia M. Hardy, MPA, is the Director for Community & Research Relations in the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Additionally, she is an Associate Scientist, Cancer Control and Population Science and has a faculty appointment as an Instructor in the Heersink School of Medicine in the Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology. Prior to the reorganizational change in early

2022, Ms. Hardy served as the Director for the Office of COE within the cancer center for 23 years. She has over 25 years of experience as a senior level administrator, consultant, and strategist in health disparities initiatives and community engagement. She provides capacity building, strategic planning and guidance to researchers, clinicians and others conducting community engagement, community outreach and research programs in medically underserved minority communities around cancer prevention and early detection. Ms. Hardy has utilized a Community Health Advisors (CHA) model in much of her work, training over 1500 CHAs across the country targeting breast, cervical, lung, colon, prostate cancers, chronic diseases along with minority accrual to clinical trials. In addition, she has extensive experience serving on non-profit boards of directors, advisory boards, leadership development and volunteer training. Her work has fostered collaborations with local, state, national and international organizations.

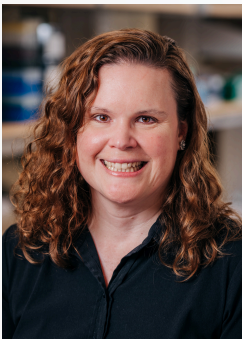
Ms. Hardy holds a BA in Communication Arts specializing in Public Relations and a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) specializing in Organizational Management and Behavior from UAB. She is a 2023 graduate of the Heersink School of Medicine Leadership Department of Medicine Class.





## Eason Hildreth, DVM

Eason Hildreth completed his DVM at North Carolina State University followed by his internship at the University of Florida and surgical residency training at the Ohio State University. He then completed a PhD at Ohio State and post-doctoral training at Ohio State and the Medical University of South Carolina focused on bone and cancer biology. He joined the Department of Pathology in 2019 as an Assistant Professor where his lab studies the role the tumor microenvironment plays in driving tumor progression in breast and renal cancer. In the classroom, he leads focused learning sessions for Cancer Biology PhD students in their first year and is the founding director of a course centered on Pathologic Basis of Disease – including cancer – that is open to all PhD students within the School of Medicine.



## Anita Hjelmeland, PhD

Dr. Anita Hjelmeland obtained a PhD in Pharmacology and Cancer Biology from Duke University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Duke University in neuro-oncology. She was Staff at the Cleveland Clinic before starting her laboratory at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2013. Dr. Hjelmeland is the Basic Science Co-Leader of the Neurooncology Program of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center and Interim Vice Chair of Research and Associate Professor of Cell, Developmental and Integrative Biology at UAB. She is also the PI for the newly funded T32 Training Program in Brain Tumor Biology. Her NIH funded laboratory is focused on identifying novel mechanisms promoting glioblastoma growth that can be targeted to improve the survival of patients. Recent projects involve the impacts of sialylation on glioblastoma signaling and metabolism; kinome shifts after tumor treating fields treatment; and improving gamma delta T cell therapy. On a personal note, she is married with two children and a Labradane.



## Earl Johnson, DMin

Dr. Earl C. Johnson is a native of Alabama. He currently resides in Huntsville, AL, where he pastors the Christ Community Church in Huntsville, Alabama for the past sixteen years. A church that he planted in 2008. Dr. Earl C. Johnson also serves as a bible college instructor for Old Testament and New Testament Theology at Huntsville Bible College in Huntsville, AL. At Huntsville Bible College he has been, an advisor for the Bachelor of Theology Program and is currently Chair of the Faculty Advisory Council. Dr. Johnson is a Senior Business Advisor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville Small Business Development Center. Dr. Johnson retired from Federal Service after thirty years as a Contracting Officer for the Army Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Dr. Earl C. Johnson attended Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University, earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Telecommunication. He worked for a short period after graduation with an NBC Television affiliate in Columbus, Georgia as a reporter/photographer. Having later received his call into the ministry, he earned a Bachelor of Theology Degree from American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, TN with honors (Magna Cum Laude). He then furthered his theological studies at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, AL, and received a Master of Divinity Degree. In addition, he earned a Doctorate of Ministry Degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dr. Johnson was previously an associate minister at First Missionary Baptist Church, Huntsville, AL, under the leadership of Dr. Julius Scruggs. He has served as pastor of Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, New Market, AL for seven years. Dr. Johnson also pastored The First Baptist Church, Bodenham, TN., for six years. While at First Baptist, he was very active in the Tennessee Baptist Missionary Educational Convention and the Middle Region where he served on the Time and Place Committee.



## Chef Glenda A. Jones, BS, Sc, Psy

Chef Glenda A. Jones is an author as well as a Nutrition, Wellness and Kitchen Coach, Natural Foods Educator, and Instructor/Proctor for the National Restaurant Association. She also serves on the Community Advisory Board for the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB. Ms. Jones has over 18 years of experience sharing her passion for teaching others how to enjoy eating while maintaining and/or improving their health and overall lifestyle. Ms. Jones' passion has led her to be featured in several local publications: Valley Magazine, Faith, and Family Matters, to name a few. Her enthusiasm and deep community ties have guided her work as Camp Lead Chef for summer camp programs as well as healthy cooking and eating classes at local churches, schools and multiple community events. Ms. Jones's desire to serve extends into consulting many entities including the Madison County Health Department, Marriott Hotels, Embassy Suites, Restaurants, Day Care Centers, Nursing Homes, Food Trucks, and the list continues to expand. Ms. Jones' personal life challenges, through her husband's health issues and pain, were the catalyst that drove her to implementing a balanced lifestyle, through a whole food, plant-based diet without sacrificing taste.



## **Kimberly Keene, MD**

Dr. Keene is a clinical Professor in the Department of Radiation Oncology with specific interests in breast and pediatric malignancies. She graduated from the University of Florida with a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences in 1997 and then stayed to complete her medical degree in 2001, graduating with honors in research. She went on to finish her residency in radiation oncology at the University of Virginia where she served as Chief Resident and then joined the faculty at UAB in 2006.

Her research interests are in the prevention of breast cancer recurrence, impacts of nutrition, clinical outcomes and toxicity. She participates in many national studies through the Translational Breast Cancer Research Consortium, NRG Oncology, and Children's Oncology Group. She served as the Chair of the UAB Cancer Committee from 2009-2018 and continues to serve as the radiation oncology representative. This committee oversees the standards of the American College of Surgeons covering the UAB tumor registry, quality improvement, community outreach and tumor boards.

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## **Helen Krontiras, MD**

Dr. Helen Krontiras is a Professor of Surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Division Director of the Division of Breast and Endocrine Surgery. In 2021, she became the Director of Clinical Affairs for the O'Neal Cancer Service Line. A native of Alabama, Dr. Krontiras attended Birmingham-Southern College and UAB School of Medicine. After general surgery residency, also at UAB, she completed a fellowship in Breast Surgery at Northwestern. Since entering academic practice in 2001, she has

maintained an active surgical practice and has been engaged in the education of medical students and residents on a daily basis. She is an associate scientist with the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center and her primary research interests are in prevention and risk assessment of breast cancer, disparity in cancer care, and outcomes of breast cancer treatment.

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## **Kathy Levy, BA**

Kathy Levy received her BA from Faulkner University in Montgomery, AL and has 30 years of experience in Healthcare and Community Relations. She is a Team Lead and the Choctaw County Coordinator for CHA's. She has extensive community outreach, engagement, and awareness knowledge to navigate patients through health issues and educated patients on health disparities related to cancer. In her spare time, she enjoys shopping, reading, traveling, and spending time with her family.



## Roxie Lockhart, MD

Dr. Roxanne Lockhart is currently a Neuro-Oncology Fellow at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She completed her Neurology residency at UAB and received a master's degree in biotechnology. At UAB, she culminated a passion for integrating scientific advancements into clinical practice and is dedicated to advancing the treatment of brain tumors.



## Bernadette Marquez-Nostra, PhD

Dr. Bernadette Marquez-Nostra is an Associate Professor of Radiology and of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Dr. Marquez-Nostra's research focuses on developing noninvasive imaging agents to predict and monitor response to targeted treatments in various types of cancer. Dr. Marquez-Nostra received a B.S. in Biochemistry from California State University, Fullerton in 2005. She earned a PhD in Chemistry from the University of California, Davis in 2011. She then conducted her postdoctoral research in Radiochemistry and cancer imaging at Washington University in St. Louis from 2012 to 2017. She then became an Assistant Professor of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging at Yale University (2017-2023), where she established a Cancer Imaging and Therapeutics research program and served as PI of multiple active NIH grants prior to relocating to UAB in 2023.



## William "Billy" Marsiglia, PhD

Dr. Billy Marsiglia received a BA in Music and BS in Biochemistry from SUNY Binghamton in 2013. He then earned his PhD in Chemistry at NYU using NMR spectroscopy to explore the activation mechanisms underlying pathogenic FGFR kinase domain mutations. During his postdoctoral work at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai starting in 2019, Billy developed a NanoBRET assay that helped to elucidate the mechanism of action for the MEK inhibitor, Trametinib. In 2022, Billy joined the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham as an Assistant Professor.





## Denise McKenzie, RN-BSN

Denise McKenzie, RN-BSN, MBA is the Director for the Protocol Review & Monitoring System (PRMS) at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Denise has spent most of her career in the pharmaceutical industry in various senior roles with the majority in clinical research, specifically in cancer research. She has served as a member on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee with Genentech to support and advance their Advancing Inclusive Research (AIR) initiative.

This initiative is a multi-pronged approach consisting of advancing protocols in rural communities, creating educational resources for both potential patients and professional audiences, and support for other community awareness programs. Denise has been successful in gaining the approval to post the Genentech videos on the UAB/O'Neal website to promote patient awareness for the consideration to be involved in a clinical trial. Additionally, she has added the AIR advanced training modules for all O'Neal clinical trial staff to complete as part of their onboarding program.



## Meghan McKenzie, MA

Meghan McKenzie works in Patient Inclusion and Health Equity in Genentech's Chief Diversity Office. She develops strategies to drive greater inclusion of racial and ethnically representative patient populations in clinical research and to advance health equity. Gaining patient, clinician and community insights early in program development is integral to developing what is important to patients as well as improving access to medicines and treatments for all patients, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender

identity, age, socioeconomic status and ability/disability. She has over 25 years of clinical development experience working at sites and in industry, and spanning multiple diseases, including oncology, ophthalmology, immunology, neurology, infectious and rare diseases. Meghan received her Master's Degree in Human Biology at San Francisco State University and her Bachelor's Degree in Economics at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



## Karina Moyano, MPH

Karina Moyano found her passion for public health when she attended UC San Diego – though she majored in Biology, it was her minor Health Care and Social Issues that lead her to pursue a Master's in Public Health from San Diego State University. Karina is currently the Senior Manager of Health Equity and Access at Exact Sciences, developing programs and strategies aimed to support cancer prevention, early detection and screening initiatives. In her role, she also supports staff outreaching to communities to

improve colorectal cancer screening.

Prior to her arrival at Exact Sciences, Karina served as the Community Outreach & Engagement (COE) Manager for the Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health; and, also worked at the American Cancer Society collaborating with community health centers to help increase cancer screenings and HPV vaccines in underserved communities.



## **Burt Nabors, MD**

L. Burt Nabors, MD, received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee in Memphis in 1991 and interned at the National Naval Medical Center. He completed a residency in Neurology at UAB in 1998 and a fellowship in Neuro-oncology in 1999 under the direction of Dr. Steven S. Rosenfeld. He joined the Neuro-Oncology Program in 1999 as an Assistant Professor of Neurology and assumed the position of Program Leader in 2005. He is board-certified in Neurology and holds medical licensure in Alabama.

Currently Dr. Nabors is Professor and Vice-Chair of Neurology for Research. He serves as the Medical Director of the Clinical Research Unit of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science. He provides oversight and direction for space and nursing needs to complete early phase clinical investigations on the campus as a whole. In this capacity, he serves as a member of the Nascent Panel committee, which provides guidance, advice, and direction for junior faculty developing translational research careers. He maintains an active basic research effort examining the role of RNA-binding proteins in neurological disease particularly cancer.



## **Soumya Niranjana, MS, PhD**

Dr. Soumya Niranjana is an Assistant Professor of Health Professions in the Department of Health Services Administration with a dual appointment in Department of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She holds a PhD in Medical Sociology from UAB and a Master of Science in Clinical Investigation Sciences from the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

Dr. Niranjana is a socio-behavioral scientist with a specific interest in equitable cancer care and outcomes. Her research focuses on identifying factors associated with low uptake of lung cancer screening and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and National Cancer Institute (NCI) have each recognized her work with awards and/or competitive grants. She is particularly interested in understanding key contributory factors for these disparities and shaping policies that improve patient health outcomes in marginalized and medically underserved communities.



## **Timiya Nolan, PhD, APRN-CNP, ANP-BC**

Dr. Timiya S. Nolan is an Associate Professor in the Division of Preventive Medicine and Associate Director of Community Outreach and Engagement the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at The University of Alabama at Birmingham. She earned a BSN, MSN and PhD at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing, and she completed postdoctoral training at The Ohio State University College of Nursing. As a nurse scientist, Dr. Nolan studies issues in self-management and prevention of chronic conditions (i.e., breast cancer and cardiovascular disease). Her community-based research program is looking at ways to improve quality of life and health among individuals from underrepresented, underserved. Dr. Nolan is the co-organizer of The Ohio State University's Health Equity through Diversity Conference. Her work has been supported by the National Cancer Institute, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen and others. Dr. Nolan's long-term goal is to build healthy communities through academic community partnerships and research that center on and support marginalized communities in their pursuits of wellness.



## **Lyse Norian, PhD**

Dr. Norian is an Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition Sciences at UAB. She performed her doctoral research in Immunology at The University of Iowa then did her post-doctoral training at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. Dr. Norian's laboratory studies the effects of diet and obesity on immune responses to cancer. Her long-term goal is to improve outcomes for cancer patients by allowing them to enjoy longer, healthier lives.



## Desiree Norwood, MBA

Desiree Norwood, resides in Sunflower MS. Where she is the 23rd Mayor Elect. She Currently serves as the Program Director for Plan A Health where the focus is to provide free health care in the Mississippi Delta. Desiree is a 2004 graduate of Ruleville Central High School, 2008 graduate of Mississippi Valley State University, where she received her B.S. in Business Administration, and a 2009 graduate of Delta State University where she received her MBA.

For over a decade, Desiree has served in several capacities as a community leader and an advocate for youth success. She has some significant contributions to not only the community in which she resides, but those neighboring counties by providing mentorship, being active in college enrollment, creating opportunities for adults to thrive by providing resources to open their own businesses or taking up trades through the “Building Your Future” campaign. Through these efforts, she has received many honors including District Parent of the Year, Wonder Woman and Community Advocate of the Year.

Desiree is a member of Persimmon Grove M.B. Church; Sunflower, MS, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Mississippi Delta Community College Board of Trustee Member; Mississippi Municipal League Board of Directors, UAB County Coordinator, SPLC Cohort '24 and other community service organizations. In July of 2016, Desiree was appointed to the Board of Trustees for Mississippi Delta Community College making her the youngest to ever receive this accolade.



## Kimberly Parker, MS

Kimberly Parker is the Sumter County Program Coordinator since 2021. She currently resides in York, AL. She has two beautiful daughters and six handsome sons. She is a proud graduate of Alabama A&M University with several degrees in Agriscience Education. This year marks her 21st year as an educator in Sumter County. She enjoys reading, arts/crafts and helping others.



## Dori Pekmezi, PhD

Dori Pekmezi is a Professor in the Department of Health Behavior, School of Public Health, University of Alabama at Birmingham, where she has worked as faculty since 2009. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Louisiana State University in 2007 and completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at Brown Medical School in 2009. Her research interests focus on theory- and technology- supported lifestyle interventions for cancer prevention and control in underserved/at risk populations.





## Neil Pfister MD, PhD

Dr. Neil Pfister is a tenured-track assistant professor/physician scientist at the University of Alabama at Birmingham within the Department of Radiation Oncology. Clinically, I serve as the disease site leader for gastrointestinal and hepatopancreaticobiliary cancers. I also serve as backup clinical service for lung cancers and lymphomas. My lab studies cellular pathways at the intersection of oxidative stress and the DNA damage response (DDR). We found that the core ATP synthase subunit ATP5A1 is cleaved following high dose ionizing radiation to release a bioactive protein (cleaved ATP5A1) that translocates from the mitochondria to the nucleus to promote an adaptive cellular program to facilitate DNA repair and cell survival. Cleaved ATP5A1 is a candidate radio sensitization target as functional blockade enhances ionizing radiation- induced cancer cell death. My laboratory is funded in part by an NIH/NCI K08 grant to study cleaved ATP5A1 (1K08CA252614-01A1), and we have also been funded by a DOD PRMRP award to utilize CRISPR/Cas9 genome-wide and genome-targeted screens to identify novel radio resistance and radio sensitizing genes. We are establishing a secondary project investigating isoforms of succinate dehydrogenase, which are differentially regulated in cancer. I also have a clinical and bioinformatics collaborations with the biotech company Numenos.AI, for which I serve on their advisory board.

Professionally, I am working to find, develop, and characterize genes that impact how cells respond to radiation therapy, and I plan to translate my basic research discoveries into clinical investigations combining targeted therapeutics with radiotherapy. My professional goals are to lead collaborative research teams to improve our understanding of cancer biology, render outstanding patient care to all people, and coordinate multidisciplinary efforts from a basic science focus to improve cancer treatment and outcomes. I am invigorated with thoughts of the advances in cancer treatment that will unfold over the coming decades, and I intend to be a significant contributor to these advances.



## Demetria Pollard-Moore

Demetria Pollard-Moore is the creator of “Journey to Lose Fitness.” The group was created eight years ago to help people understand that there’s joy in fitness and to help them find their way to a healthier lifestyle and understand that their health is their wealth. She struggled with obesity for most of her life but found a way to enjoy fitness and now takes people on the Journey with her. Participants in the program are introduced to a safe non-judgmental space for fitness at all levels. Demetria is a group fitness coach as well as a diabetes lifestyle coach. She is the 2019 recipient of the Alabama Spirit of excellence in Childcare. She became a Community Health Advisor Volunteer in November of 2023 which she states is just a continuation of her helping people on their journey toward better health outcomes.

For the past 4 years she has coordinated the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk/run and Fund raiser in the Shorter Alabama Community. Some of the funds raised have been used to support local women undergoing treatment for Breast Cancer.



## Justin Pope, BS

Justin Pope is a native of Pope, MS. He's married to Denise Pope and they have 3 wonderful children, Justice, Justin Jr. (LJ), and Jordyn. He received a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information from Mars Hill University. He works at Panola Medical Center in Batesville, MS where he is the Director of Ancillary Services and Marketing. He attends Ford Chapel AME Zion church where his lovely wife is the pastor. He serves on numerous boards for his community, including the Community Advisory Board at O'Neal

Comprehensive Cancer Center. He is an Alderman of Pope and the Co-Chair of the Pope-Courtland Water Board. He also serves on the Panola County Juneteeth Committee. He enjoys helping others and connecting people together for the greater cause.



## Kenny Ray, MPH

Kenneth Ray, MPH, director of programs, Center for Black Health & Equity. He is responsible for overseeing the capacity building protocol, the application of evidence-based strategies in all disease and risk factor areas; and planning, implementation, and evaluation of policy, system, and environmental change interventions. In addition to a master's degree in public health from Hunter College, City University of New York, and a bachelor's degree in health education from North Carolina Central University, Mr. Ray has

more than 30 years of experience in planning, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based interventions in state and community settings. Mr. Ray grew up in New York City and North Carolina, and currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia. He is an avid sports fan, music lover, and loves outdoor events with family and friends.



## Ginger Reeves BS, CCRC

Ginger Reeves is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She began her career at UAB January 2006, where she was a clinical research coordinator for 14 years in Pulmonary Medicine with a focus on Cystic Fibrosis, prior to moving to the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center January 2020 as the Manager of Clinical Research Regulations. In June 2022, Ginger was promoted to the Director of Clinical Protocol Operations where she oversees the day-to-day operation of clinical trials at the OCCC.



## Lauren Roberts, BA, JD

Lauren Roberts is the Executive Director for Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center. She earned her Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctorate at Louisiana State University. Lauren brings over 17 years of experience in a variety of non-profit settings, including serving as Vice President of Strategic Communications and Development at A+ Education Partnership and as President of the Junior League of Birmingham. Lauren currently serves as President of the Members Council for Leadership Birmingham, Board Member of the Kiwanis Club of Birmingham, Chair of the Community Advisory Board of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center's Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, Board Member of Trinity United Methodist Church, and Board Member of the Birmingham Chapter of the LSU Alumni Association. She is passionate about improving the lives of women and children in our community.



## Karla Ross, MBA, MSMIS

I like to spread the word about the benefit and importance of clinical trials. The HER2 Clinical trial Doctors and team went above and beyond to take care of me - beyond the medicine. I could let my advocating for myself and my guard down because the Doctors and team advocated for me during the trial. Regardless, if it was to study the data, I was able to benefit from the extra care and receive the highest quality cancer treatment. I am honored to get more medical professionals and the community (especially the disenfranchised part of the community) thinking about the impact of everyone being privy to the gift of medical research! I'm a Contract Specialist for the Department of Defense United States Air Force and I love walking and the beach.



## Barry Sleckman, MD, PhD

Barry Paul Sleckman, MD, PhD, is the Director of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Sleckman is a world-renowned researcher who focuses on understanding how DNA double strand breaks are generated and repaired — a topic important for cancer and immune system development and function. Sleckman moved to UAB on Jan. 6, 2020, from Weill Cornell Medicine, where he most recently served as an associate director of the Meyer Cancer Center. Sleckman completed his MD and PhD in immunology at Harvard Medical School. He then completed his residency in internal medicine and fellowship in infectious diseases at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. After completing his postdoctoral training in molecular immunology in the laboratory of Dr. Frederick Alt at Boston Children's Hospital, Sleckman started his own laboratory in 1998 as an assistant professor in the Department of Pathology and Immunology at the Washington University School of Medicine. Sleckman has held positions as a professor of pathology and laboratory medicine and a professor of microbiology and immunology, and he also served as an associate director of the Siteman Cancer Center at Washington University for 10 years prior to moving to Weill Cornell Medicine.



## Erica Stringer - Reasor, MD

Erica Stringer-Reasor, MD, is an Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of the Breast Cancer Program at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB. She received her undergraduate degree at Auburn University and her doctorate in medicine from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in Mobile, followed by an internship in Internal Medicine at Tulane University Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a residency in Internal Medicine at Baptist Health System in Birmingham, Alabama.

Dr. Stringer-Reasor subsequently completed fellowships in Medical Hematology/Oncology and Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacogenomics at The University of Chicago in Illinois. In 2015, she joined the faculty at UAB. Her research focus remains on developing novel targeted therapies to treat aggressive subtypes of breast cancer including human epidermal growth factor receptor positive (HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-/PR-/HER2-) by designing clinical trials that translate laboratory findings. She continues to partner with breast cancer specific lab-based and clinician-scientists to improve efficacy in drug development, clinical trial design, pharmacokinetics (PK)/pharmacodynamics (PD) analysis, cancer genetics, early detection, and most importantly patient care.



## Joanie Thompson

Joanie Thompson is the Founder and President of Alabama Communities Together (ACT), a consulting group focused on community engagement and empowerment. As a Community Engagement & Collaboration Consultant, she unites stakeholders to identify issues, prioritize solutions, and foster trust through collaboration. Additionally, she chairs Bush Hills Connections 501(c)(3), working to enhance the competitiveness of Bush Hills and model community-driven improvements for other neighborhoods.

With over four decades of experience, she has led impactful community health initiatives, notably surpassing minority recruitment goals in UAB's national clinical trials. Thompson is deeply involved in numerous committees and boards dedicated to preventive health care, coalition building, and community outreach. Her slogan, "Working Together We Can Make A Difference," reflects her commitment to creating healthier, more inclusive communities.





## Rodney Tucker, MD, MMM

Rodney O. Tucker, MD MMM is a native Alabamian who graduated from medical school at UAB in 1989 and is board certified in Internal Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine. After a career in private practice, home care and hospice services, Dr. Tucker returned to his alma mater in 2002. Since that time, he has been active at UAB in the development of a comprehensive clinical, educational and research program in palliative care, including the Southeast Institute for Innovation in Palliative and Supportive Care at UAB. Serving currently as the Director of the UAB Center for Palliative and Supportive Care, Dr. Tucker also completed his Masters in Medical Management at the University of Southern California in 2009. Dr. Tucker has been an active member of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) and the Center for the Advancement of Palliative Care (CAPC) for over a decade, having served in several leadership roles in the Academy including serving on the Board of Directors from 2014-2022. Additionally, he served as the national President of AAHPM in 2020-2021 and during that time was a key leader in implementing a new strategic plan that incorporated principles of diversity, equity and inclusion into the core values of the organization. He currently holds the Christine Ritchie Endowed Chair in Palliative Care Leadership at UAB. Currently, Dr. Tucker serves as the Associate Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center and is the lead organizer of the LGBTQ+ Faculty Association in the Heersink School of Medicine.



## Angelia Walker

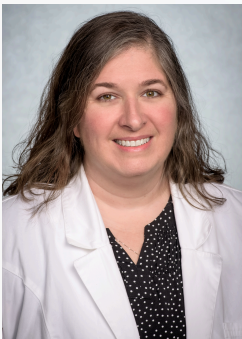
Elder Angelia D. Goodwin Walker is an ordained itinerant minister and founder/co-pastor of Ebenezer Victory Empowerment Church, Birmingham, AL. She is a staff member in the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement with the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center. She promotes health and research for chronic disease in the Madison County community. She is an Aerospace Engineer employed over 36 years at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration/ Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL, and serves as the Director of the Spacecraft and Vehicle Systems Department. She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards including the Astronauts Silver Snoopy, Supervisor of the Year, Director Commendations, Technology All-Star for Women of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, NASA Exceptional Leadership Medal, NASA Exceptional Service Medal, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority 2004 Woman of Distinction, and a Senior Executive Services Appointee of the Federal Government. She graduated from Tuskegee University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. She is also a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute, and a 2005 Fellows graduate of Harvard University School of Business Executive Managers Development Program. She attended Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia. Listed in the registry of Outstanding Young Women of America and is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



## Cordie Walker

I am Cordia Walker, born and raised in North Central Mississippi in the city of Grenada, where I currently resides. I am an only child and mother of 3 boys and 1 girl, grandmother of 6 and 4 great-grands of whom I adore profoundly. As a child one of my greatest aspirations was becoming a nurse or a teacher. Nevertheless, I became a professional hair stylist. Ten years into the profession, I was diagnosed with Stage 2 Breast Cancer. During my recuperation, I was linked to the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center's

Deep South Network for Cancer Control and became a CHARP under the leadership of Local Coordinator, Mary Stewart, who now continues to serve as a CHA. The CHARP connection presented an opportunity to share my story with many citizens of my community. Friends and strangers, who had been diagnosed with cancer, who had heard about my victorious battle, would call upon me just to ask about my journey. I had a unique story to share! Being that I was 39 years old, my mind was far away from getting a mammogram until the day I discovered a lump! Scheduling an appointment immediately, there was a negative result from the mammogram. A further test confirmed that it was a malignant mass. Thirty-one years late, I remain cancer-free!



## Anna Wilbanks, CRNP

Anna Wilbanks brings with her 27 years of nursing experience. She holds an Associate Degree in Nursing from Wallace Community College Selma and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Auburn University Montgomery in 2001. After a 15-year hiatus, she returned to UAB School of Nursing for a Master of Science in Nursing, Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Degree. During her career, Anna worked in many areas including Labor and Delivery, the Emergency Department, as a Public Health Inspector for

Assisted Living Facilities, and finally Research. In Clinical Research, Anna found the perfect mixture of patient care and collaboration with the healthcare team.

Additionally, during the pandemic, Anna became a cancer patient, diagnosed with colorectal cancer. In addition to enduring surgeries and chemotherapy, the experience lent itself to looking at the healthcare world through a new set of eyes. Through the eyes of a patient. This perspective changed her views as a healthcare provider and on how she provides care.

# Breakout Facilitators



**Kim Braden**

Coordinator  
Jefferson County, AL



**Floretta Dortch**

Coordinator:  
Talladega County, AL  
Calhoun County, AL



**Carolyn Duncan**

Coordinator:  
Marengo County, AL



**Pearlette Edwards**

Coordinator:  
Bullock County, AL



**Carla Harrell**

Coordinator:  
Shelby County, AL  
Chilton County, AL



**Debbie Hill**

Coordinator:  
Humphries County, MS



**Gretel Holston**

Coordinator:  
Walker County, AL



**Nicole Rogers**

Coordinator:  
Bolivar County, MS



**Alice Stanton**

Coordinator:  
Monroe County, AL



**Cordie Walker**

Coordinator:  
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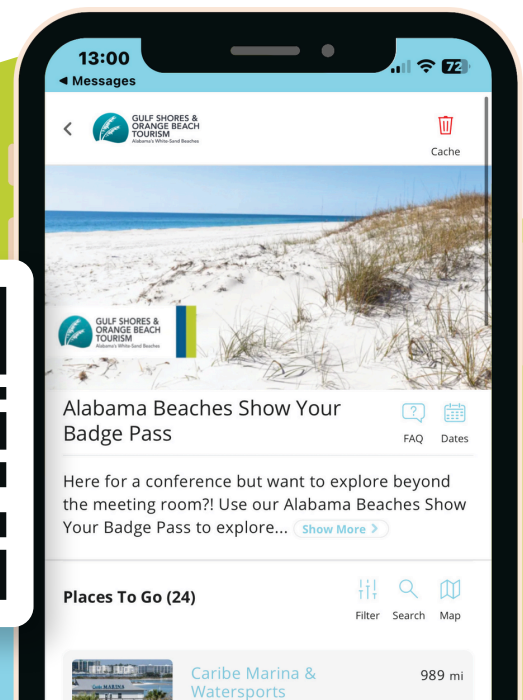
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