

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

CANCER CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The University of Kansas Cancer Center earns National Cancer Institute's most prestigious status—Comprehensive

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (July 7, 2022) —The University of Kansas Cancer Center has been designated as a “Comprehensive” cancer center by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). This is the highest level of recognition awarded by the NCI and is the gold standard for cancer centers.

“Fifteen years ago, this entire community joined together and decided that national designation, and ultimately Comprehensive designation, of our cancer center was our top priority as a region. It was our moonshot,” said Douglas A. Girod, M.D., chancellor of the University of Kansas. “Well, today we’ve landed on the moon, so to speak. What was once a dream is now a reality. And that reality means better patient care, better health outcomes and better research. And it means we are one step closer to our ultimate goal – which is to rid our society of cancer so that we all have the opportunity to live happier, healthier lives.”

In addition to Comprehensive status, the KU Cancer Center was awarded a five-year, \$13.8 million grant to support the center’s research programs, shared equipment and resources. It also received an “outstanding” rating by NCI reviewers.

“Comprehensive designation is a crucial milestone in our journey to conquer all cancers,” said Roy Jensen, M.D., director of the KU Cancer Center. “You might ask, ‘What does Comprehensive designation mean for people with cancer?’ As one of just 53 NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the nation, it means patients will be cared for by the world’s leading cancer experts who have access to a robust portfolio of clinical trials. It also means we now have increased access to more federal funding and research dollars, which helps us grow and retain our team of internationally renowned researchers and physician-scientists.”

The University of Kansas Cancer Center has nearly 350 researchers and 150 disease-specific oncologists. They conduct all phases of cancer research, from laboratory studies to clinical trials to population-based studies that address environmental and behavioral factors that contribute to cancer.

Research operations at the KU Cancer Center have already contributed an estimated \$2.5 billion in economic impact to the region since 2007 when the center began working toward NCI designation in earnest. It's estimated that those numbers will only increase with the anticipated expansion that will accompany the KU Cancer Center achieving Comprehensive designation. University leaders note that the growth of the cancer center has contributed to additional advancements at the university.

"Two decades ago, when KU Medical Center leadership decided to focus on cancer research, there were some who worried that other areas might be left behind," said Robert D. Simari, M.D., executive vice chancellor of the University of Kansas Medical Center. "However, it has never been more true that rising tides raise all ships. With the success of the cancer center, centers of excellence in Alzheimer's disease, kidney disease, diabetes, aging and many others have flourished."

The Stowers Institute for Medical Research and Children's Mercy Kansas City are consortium partners with the KU Cancer Center, while The University of Kansas Health System is a clinical partner.

"This designation from the National Cancer Institute confirms the excellence of The University of Kansas Cancer Center and underscores the importance of research, combined with exceptional clinical care," said Alejandro Sánchez Alvarado, Ph.D., executive director and chief scientific officer of the Stowers Institute for Medical Research. "Science at Stowers is deliberately designed to make the important biological discoveries that can lead to potential new treatments and eventual cures for cancer and other diseases. We are honored to participate with the KU Cancer Center and Children's Mercy in this most auspicious endeavor."

"This designation will strengthen the region's research environment and fast-track new and improved cancer treatments for patients, including children," said Paul Kempinski, M.S., FACHE, president and chief executive officer of Children's Mercy Kansas City. "Of the 5,000 cancer treatment centers nationwide, very few have partnered with a pediatric hospital as part of its consortium. Working together, we can continue to bring the very best that science and technology have to offer for children with cancer."

Bob Page, president and chief executive officer of The University of Kansas Health System, noted that the quest for Comprehensive status has been a collective effort. "Today is a celebration of the power of collaboration," he said. "It's about bringing together our organizations' strengths in research, education and patient care to demonstrate the remarkable impact of academic medicine."

With Comprehensive designation, the outreach activities of the KU Cancer Center are expected to expand across its catchment area—defined as the state of Kansas and western Missouri—even more.

"We are so pleased with and proud of the work being done across the KU Cancer Center's catchment area at our Masonic Cancer Alliance (MCA) member sites," said Gary Doolittle, M.D., professor of clinical oncology and director of the MCA. "As the outreach network of KU Cancer Center, MCA sites have done a tremendous job for more than a decade now bringing outreach activities to their communities, offering access to clinical trials to their patients close to home, participating in professional development and much more."

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About The University of Kansas Cancer Center:

The University of Kansas Cancer Center is transforming cancer research and clinical care by linking an innovative approach to drug discovery, delivery and development to a nationally accredited patient care program. Our consortium center includes cancer research and health care professionals associated with the University of Kansas Medical Center and The University of Kansas Health System; the University of Kansas, Lawrence; The Stowers Institute for Medical Research; Children's Mercy; and in partnership with members of the Masonic Cancer Alliance.

About the University of Kansas Medical Center:

The University of Kansas Medical Center's mission is to educate exceptional health care professionals through a full range of undergraduate, graduate, professional, postdoctoral and continuing education programs in the schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions. KU Medical Center also advances the health sciences through world-class research programs; provides compassionate and state-of-the-art patient care in an academic medical center environment; and works with communities in every Kansas county to improve the health of Kansans.

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

CANCER CENTER

The University of Kansas Cancer Center earns National Cancer Institute's most prestigious designation: Why It Matters

The University of Kansas Cancer Center has been designated as a “comprehensive” cancer center by the National Cancer Institute. This is the highest level of recognition awarded by the NCI and is the gold standard for cancer centers.

KU Cancer Center received an “outstanding” rating by NCI reviewers and was awarded a \$2,766,779 grant (\$13,833,895 over five years) to support the center’s research programs and shared equipment and resources.

About The University of Kansas Cancer Center and its partners

The University of Kansas Cancer Center has nearly 350 researchers and 150 disease-specific oncologists. They conduct all phases of cancer research, from laboratory studies to clinical trials to population-based studies that address environmental and behavioral factors that contribute to cancer.

Our physician-scientists care for patients in partnership with our clinical partner The University of Kansas Health System. Children’s Mercy and Stowers Institute for Medical Research are recognized by the NCI as consortium partners of The University of Kansas Cancer Center. Stowers investigators are expanding our fundamental knowledge of how cancer works, which is essential to the development of new therapies. Children’s Mercy is a leader in pediatric care and research. Masonic Cancer Alliance, the outreach network of The University of Kansas Cancer Center, is a membership-based organization that partners with cancer research, care and support professionals to advance the quality and accessibility of cancer prevention, detection, treatment and survivorship in the Heartland.

About NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center Designation

The comprehensive designation, received after an in-depth peer review process, is awarded by the National Cancer Institute, the federal government's principal agency for cancer research and training. It recognizes programs with an exceptional depth and breadth of research, significant transdisciplinary research that bridges scientific areas, and an effective community outreach program.

A 2009 studyⁱ led by researchers at Dartmouth compared mortality rates at NCI cancer centers against non-NCI centers. They found that mortality at both one year and three years after a cancer diagnosis was “significantly” reduced for patients at NCI cancer centers. The likelihood of mortality one year after a diagnosis among NCI cancer center patients was about 25% lower compared to patients at other centers.

In another studyⁱⁱ, researchers at City of Hope assessed care at NCI comprehensive cancer centers compared to non-comprehensive centers. They found that adults with a newly diagnosed cancer who were also treated at a comprehensive center experienced “superior” survival compared to those treated at a non-comprehensive center. After adjusting for sociodemographic and clinical variables, there was a 20-50% increased risk of mortality for those treated at a non-comprehensive center.

The designation places KU Cancer Center in the company of institutions such as the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Mayo Clinic Cancer Center.

Cancer-Free Kansas and Beyond

The University of Kansas Cancer Center is the only NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center in Kansas. For those living in our catchment area, the designation affirms they have access to the most advanced, research-guided therapies, as well as hundreds of clinical studies that test new approaches to preventing, diagnosing and treating cancer.

KU Cancer Center currently manages 370 clinical trials. Of these, 63 are investigator-initiated trials, meaning they were designed and implemented by physician-scientists at KU Cancer Center. In addition to evaluating potential new prevention, diagnostic or therapeutic approaches, these trials are often the last line of defense for patients when standard therapies have failed. Due to their complex nature investigator-initiated trials are a distinguishing advantage of academic medical centers. These trials take elaborate support systems to execute study conception, design, quality control and assurance, and data analysis and interpretation.

KU Cancer Center physician-scientists bring the most advanced therapies to our region. For example, our team repurposed a topical antifungal agent that is now being studied in different cancers, including bladder cancer and acute leukemia. In another effort, a physician-scientist is exploring a chemotherapy-free regimen to treat people with advanced gastroesophageal and colorectal cancers.

With a catchment area encompassing the entire state of Kansas and western Missouri, The University of Kansas Cancer Center's goal is to build a deep understanding of the cancer issues faced by those we serve and respond with tailored solutions. KU Cancer Center works with partner organizations to improve the health of all people in our catchment area. The collaborative work focuses on reducing the number of new cancer cases and the number of deaths caused by the disease, especially among underrepresented populations. This includes initiatives to increase HPV vaccination rates, as well as developing, testing and disseminating interventions to increase lung, skin, breast, prostate and colorectal cancer screening in racially diverse and rural populations in the region.

Economic Impact

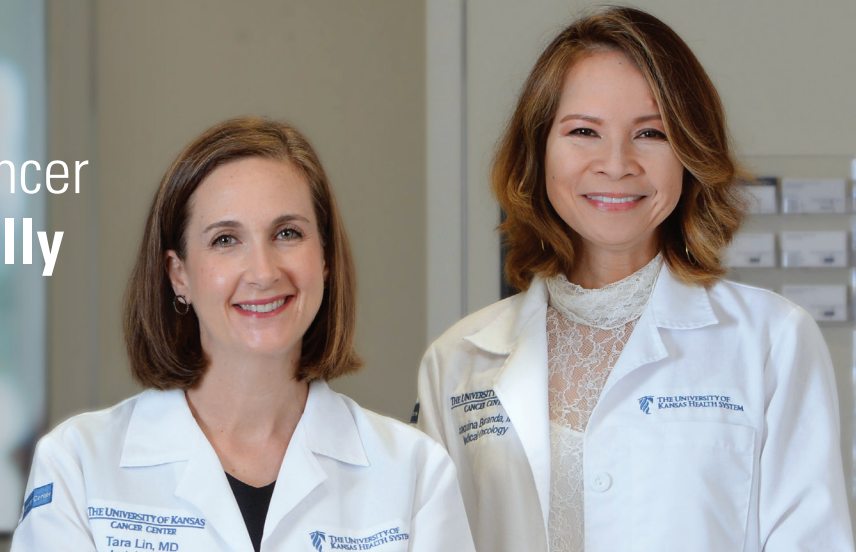
KU Cancer Center makes substantial contributions to the state's life sciences economy. This new designation will further enhance the cancer center's ability to recruit faculty physicians and scientists of the highest caliber who will bring with them highly funded research programs and continue to foster a culture of entrepreneurship in our region. From 2007 through 2022, it is projected that The University of Kansas Cancer Center will contribute \$2.3B to the region's economy through its research activities.

Researchers currently hold grants that total more than \$79 million (as of April 2022) in external funding.

ⁱ Onega T, Duell EJ, Shi X, Demidenko E, Gottlieb D, Goodman DC. Influence of NCI cancer center attendance on mortality in lung, breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer patients. *Med Care Res Rev.* 2009;66(5):542-560. doi:10.1177/1077558709335536

ⁱⁱ Wolfson JA, Sun CL, Wyatt LP, Hurria A, Bhatia S. Impact of care at comprehensive cancer centers on outcome: Results from a population-based study. *Cancer.* 2015 Nov 1;121(21):3885-93. doi: 10.1002/cncr.29576. Epub 2015 Jul 28. PMID: 26218755; PMCID: PMC4892698.

The University of Kansas Cancer Center aims to **fundamentally transform** the experience of **cancer in our world.**



By the Numbers

350

researchers

and clinicians. Unmatched by any other cancer program in the region

150

disease-specific oncologists

25%

greater chance

of survival for patients treated at NCI centers

370+

clinical trials

managed at a time, and actively enrolling patients in at least 180

34,100

people enrolled

in clinical trials since 2010

\$2.3

billion

to be contributed to the regional economy due to our research*

NCI Comprehensive Designation

The National Cancer Institute recognizes cancer centers around the country that meet rigorous standards for state-of-the-art research.

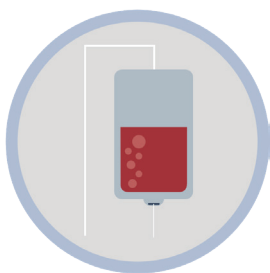


The University of Kansas Cancer Center is the **only NCI comprehensive cancer center in the region** and 1 of 53 in the nation.

Why Cancer Research Matters

Cancer research is our best defense to prevent 9.6 million deaths worldwide each year. Research is the foundation of progress for our region's health and all cancer treatments today.

NCI-designated cancer centers play a role in **every major advancement** of cancer treatment.



Tomorrow's New Treatments, **Today**

We offer clinical trials along the entire cancer continuum, from prevention and diagnosis to treatment and survivorship. Due to the research we conduct as an NCI comprehensive cancer center, we can offer **new treatments before they are widely available.**

NCI Comprehensive Designation: **Why it Matters**

The University of Kansas Cancer Center has been designated a "comprehensive" cancer center by the National Cancer Institute. This is the highest level of recognition awarded by the NCI and is the gold standard for cancer centers. Comprehensive cancer centers are leaders in cancer research, diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

*Projection (2007-2022)