

THE GW CANCER INSTITUTE CHRONICLES

C O M M I T M E N T

C O M P A S S I O N

C O M M U N I T Y

Gala Honors Heroes, Raises Funds for GW Cancer Institute

A packed ballroom at the Willard Hotel on April 2 and a slate of prominent honorees set the stage for the first gala dedicated to the GW Cancer Institute. The event raised more than \$250,000 for the Institute, with a notable mix of corporate and private benefactors who bought tables for the evening, interspersed with GW guests.

The evening's program featured a keynote address by U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, MD, who emphasized the importance of prevention in the scheme of wellness and in understanding health disparities as keys to finding cures for diseases like cancer. Dr. Carmona substituted for Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson who addressed the crowd of 400 via video to kick off the evening. Thompson served as Honorary Gala chair.

Serving as emcee was WUSA Channel 9 News anchorwoman and reporter Andrea Roane, who spearheads the Buddy Check 9 breast cancer awareness and early detection campaign and who has been instrumental in helping to secure continued funding for the GW Mammovan. Roane kept the program moving from the video about the Cancer Institute to the presentation of awards.

GW Provost and Vice President for Health Affairs Dr. John F. Williams articulated the vision behind



Five individuals were singled out for their extraordinary work in cancer prevention and treatment—Dr. Ellen Sigal, Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, Dr. Al Goldson (posthumously), Zora Brown and Lance Armstrong. Above, from left, are Sigal, von Eschenbach, Erin Goldson, Provost and VPHA Dr. John F. Williams, Amy and Ava Goldson, Brown and GW Cancer Institute Executive Director Dr. Steven Patierno. Not pictured is GW alumnus Steve Friedman, who accepted the award on behalf of Armstrong.

the creation of The GW Cancer Institute.

“More than a year ago, when we looked at what the GW Medical Center could do for our community, we were faced with some startling and rather staggering statistics. First, that Washington, DC, has the highest cancer mortality rate in the nation and second, that minorities with certain cancers—breast, prostate, colon and lung—are dying at higher rates. We decided to make it our mission to find out why and to do something about this growing problem. Our approach was to create a uniquely focused Cancer

Institute to concentrate on cancer disparities in our own community.”

After dinner, GW Cancer Institute Executive Director Steven Patierno, PhD, began the program by describing how the Gala would serve as a launching event for a second year of Cancer Institute activities.

“This Gala is a milestone for our GW Cancer Institute. Although the Cancer Institute itself is relatively new, GW is not new to cancer. We have a long history of strong cancer research, education and outstanding clinical care. Now the Cancer Institute will serve to coordinate, inte-

Continued on page 5

With Compassion and Commitment, GWCI Begins a New Era

The GW Cancer Institute (GWCI) is pleased to present this inaugural issue of *The GW Cancer Institute*

Chronicles. Now just part way into its second year, the GWCI is moving forward with great momentum, fueled by our hugely successful first GWCI Gala, held on April 2. This event was the perfect cap to our first year of operations. We

raised more than \$250,000 for our Institute to support another year of activities and community outreach. We not only honored some of the best in the cancer community but we also brought our new Institute to the attention of those important in government, the private sector and corporate sectors as we laid the groundwork for a new year.

GWCI is an urban oncology center in the heart of Washington, DC, bringing multidisciplinary clinical, research, education and outreach programs together in a comprehensive approach to cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment. We are dedicated to understanding cancer disparities and the unequal burden of cancer in

certain vulnerable populations, and to eliminating cancer disparities in metropolitan Washington, DC.



Launched in January 2003, GWCI is charged with integrating and coordinating the broad spectrum of cancer-related activities across the GW medical campus and among its affiliated partners. GWCI represents the dedicated commitment of the GW Medical

Center, the GW Hospital, the GW Medical Faculty Associates and our closely associated private practice groups, to expand the depth and breadth of our cancer efforts. The Institute encompasses nearly 80 basic science and clinical faculty members from four GW schools (Medicine and Health Sciences, Public Health and Health Services, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Arts and Sciences), and two affiliated institutions (Children's National Medical Center and The Institute for Genomic Research—TIGR). And, we continue to enjoy close ties with the National Cancer Institute.

On the education and research fronts, GWCI is host to one of the seven cancer-specific PhD programs in the country. Our Molecular and

Cellular Oncology graduate program has trained more than 20 PhDs and MD/PhDs since it began in 1994. The annualized cancer-related research funding across entities exceeds \$18 million and includes basic, translational and applied research ranging from cancer molecular genetics, to cancer prevention and control epidemiology, to analysis of the impact of Medicaid on minority health disparities. On the clinical and outreach fronts, we are building multidisciplinary focus groups of clinicians and researchers targeted at breast, prostate, GI-colorectal and lung cancer, and charting the future with development of a strategic plan for expansion of our clinical oncology programs. We are in the process of mirroring our successful Breast Cancer Programs with the launching of a men's oncology program. Both include dedicated community outreach that will be overseen by GWCI's new Office of Cancer Education and Outreach.

Through *Chronicles*, we will keep you informed of our progress as GWCI grows. For more information about GWCI, visit www.gwcancerinstitute.org.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Patierno, PhD
Executive Director
The GW Cancer Institute

We are committed to educating both health professionals and our community about cancer and prevention and control. We are committed to the research that will one day alleviate the suffering and death from this dreaded disease. We are committed to offering the best quality compassionate clinical care for our cancer patients.

— Dr. Steven Patierno

COMMITMENT

Wine Tasting Scores High Marks, Targets Funds for GWCI

Imagine some of the best chefs in Washington, DC, concocting a delectable seven-course dinner at the prestigious Watergate Hotel while participants sampled up to 19 fine wines from California. Then, imagine the next day, being able to taste 2002 vintage wines from some of the most well-known California wineries. This was the scenario at the 19th Annual California Barrel Tasting and Vintners Dinner California, a two-day event sponsored by MacArthur Beverages in late March to benefit the Addy and Bruce Bassin Memorial Cancer Fund at The George Washington University Cancer Institute. The event was spearheaded by Ruth Bassin, who lost her husband Addy to cancer. The event also honored her late son.

The guest chef list for the dinner read like a *Who's Who*, including Robert Wiedmaier of Marcel's restaurant, while the wines came from an array of well-known California wineries. The Addy and Bruce Bassin Memorial Cancer Fund will support the ongoing mission of the GW Cancer Institute.

"This is a prestigious fundraiser that is gaining in popularity, every year it is held," said GWCI Executive Director Steven Patierno. "We are deeply grateful to Mrs.



Ruth Bassin samples wines with GWCI Executive Director Steven Patierno at the 19th Annual Winemakers Dinner at the Watergate Hotel. Proceeds from this event went to The Addy and Bruce Bassin Memorial Cancer Fund at The George Washington University Cancer Institute.

Bassin for her support of GWCI through this wonderful event." For more information, go to www.Bassins.com.

Golf Tournament Scores *Hole-in-One* for Prostate Cancer



In November 2003, the First Annual Prostate Cancer Tournament was held at Wellington Golf and Country Club in Wellington, Florida. With the support of the Wellington Regional Medical Center, a Universal Health Services hospital, nearly \$25,000 was raised for the GW Cancer Institute, in support of its Men's Oncology initiative. Pictured, from left, are Jim Doyle, GW Alumnus Ross Cohen, MD '84, Honorary Chairperson and Baseball Hall of Famer Gary Carter, and Helen Doyle. Doyle attributes her husband's recovery from prostate cancer to Dr. Cohen and has made it her mission to create an endowment for the GW Cancer Institute for "Prostate Cancer Research, Education and Outreach," especially as it pertains to the benefits of early detection.

COMMITMENT

For more information on giving to the GW Cancer Institute, contact Thomas Hamer,
GW Medical Center Advancement, 202-994-7511, mcdtph@gwumc.edu

COMMITMENT

Mammovan 'Rides On' Thanks to Private Donor

In the Fall of 2003, it became painfully obvious to those running the popular GW Mammovan Program that funding was tight. One of the benefactors of the program was cutting funding. The van itself needed major updating, and the repairs were going to be expensive. A funding source was desperately needed.

The media, with the help of Andrea Roane of WUSA-9, did its best to publicize the plight of the GW Mammovan in a search for funding sources. With the van scheduled well into 2004, there was a question of what would happen and whether this longtime community outreach program could meet its obligations for the remainder of the year.

Enter Bert Brooks, a longtime Medical Center supporter who, in his 90th year, was well aware of what the GW Mammovan did in the community and what it would mean not to have this mobile mammography program traveling to underserved areas. After viewing a CD about the GW Mammovan, Brooks was convinced to donate \$350,000—

enough money to keep the van operating for another year.

GW Mammovan Program Director Jean Lynn, MPH, RN, OCN, welcomed the generous gift. "Without Mr. Brooks' generous donation, the Mobile Mammography program would not have had the funds to sustain operations for the remainder of the year. This donation will allow us to continue our mission to reach women without resources and hopefully detect breast cancer at its earliest stage."

The GW Mammovan is a part of GW's fully accredited Mobile Mammography Program, which makes breast cancer screening readily available to all women of metropolitan Washington. Dedicated to providing area women with education and support, the Mammovan travels to



GW Mammovan benefactor Bert Brooks poses with Program Director Jean Lynn by the mobile mammography unit, a familiar site in underserved areas of the region.

community and corporate sites, offering screening in a comfortable, convenient environment. The Program is committed to making this service available to every woman, regardless of her ability to pay. The Mammovan is supported by gifts from the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund, the Cancer Research Foundation of America, Saks Fifth Avenue Chevy Chase and Chicken Out Rotisserie Do Good Foundation.

Other GWCI Accomplishments . . .

- Successfully chartered by GW as an Institute of the University
- Participated in the Lance Armstrong Foundation's Tour of Hope.
- Selected as the only area medical center for the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days.
- Sponsored the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.
- Hosted a booth at the Intercultural Cancer Council's "Symposium on Minorities, the Medically Underserved & Cancer."
- Keynoted, along with Dr. Harold Freeman, the National Minority Health Foundation's Leadership Summit on Health Disparities" in Washington, DC.

Our thanks to all who have made this a banner inaugural year for the GW Cancer Institute. Your generosity will keep our mission moving forward into another year of operations.

Kuhn Estate Gift Funds Cancer Education and Outreach Coordinator

The Office of Prevention and Control in the GW Cancer Institute is pleased to announce that Francisco Semião, MPH '02, will join the GWCI team as Cancer Education and Outreach Coordinator. Funded in part by a generous gift from the Ann Kuhn estate, Semião will design and coordinate the GWCI's Cancer Education and Outreach Campaigns, focusing on prostate, breast and colorectal cancer. Semião will also serve as liaison to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Cancer Society and the local Department of Health for cancer prevention and control initiatives. He will also work toward developing a curriculum for the School of Public Health and Health Services on Cancer Prevention and Control.



U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, MD, keynoted the first GW Cancer Institute Gala, representing Health and Human Services Secretary and Gala Chair Tommy G. Thompson.

First Cancer Institute Gala a Success

Continued from page 1

grate and expand these programs. We expect to translate our efforts into advances in cancer prevention and control, diagnosis, treatment and improved access to quality health-care.”

Honored posthumously was Howard University oncologist Dr. Alfred Goldson, who died unexpectedly of heart problems and was an ally in the Cancer Institute’s mission to explore cancer disparities. National Cancer Institute Director Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach,

Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, Dr. Ellen Sigal and Zora Brown were also honored (see box and photos on page 7). Steve Friedman, a GW alumnus, cancer survivor and fellow rider with Armstrong during the Tour of Hope, accepted the award on behalf of Armstrong who was training in Italy in hopes of winning his 6th Tour de France.

Dancing and results of a Silent Auction capped off the evening. Preparations for next year’s Gala are already underway.

To learn more about The George Washington University Cancer Institute and special events, call 202-994-2449 or visit www.GWCancerInstitute.org

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GW CANCER INSTITUTE GALA 2004 . . .



Pictured above, from left to right, Master of Ceremonies Andrea Roane, left, talks with GW Mammovan and Breast Care Center Program Director Jean Lynn; Comcast, one of the event *premier sponsors* provided red carpet coverage, Producer Joshua Friedman interviews Dr. Michael Manyak, interim chair of the Department of Urology; GW President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg kicked off the evening's program; Gala attendee Dr. Ali Mokhtari Majdi, center, shared the evening with his son and daughter-in-law; from left, sponsors Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Katzen, GW Provost and VPHA Dr. John F. Williams, sponsors Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Katzen, sponsor Dr. Cy Katzen and GW Cancer Institute Executive Director Dr. Steven Patierno; City Councilwoman Sandy Allen with Assistant Vice President Leroy Charles; Vice President Richard Sawaya talks with Sheryl Edwards of the DC Department of Health; GW melanoma cancer researchers Drs. Edward DeFabo and Frances Noonan; Assistant Vice President Bernard Demczuk hosted Ivan Walks, former Department of Health director, and Gregory McCarthy, right, deputy chief of staff to Mayor Anthony Williams.






2004
GW
CANCER
INSTITUTE
HONOREES



Pictured above, left to right, by row: U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, MD, left, shakes hands with former U.S. Senator Connie Mack while NCI Director Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, center, looks on; Honoree Dr. Ellen Sigal, left, talks with Dr. Rachel Brem, director of Breast Imaging and Interventional Center, and Dr. Henry Brem, director of Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University; GWCI Executive Director Dr. Steven Patierno, left, and Dr. John F. Williams give Zora Brown the Cancer Compassion Award; Amy Goldson, left, accepted a posthumous award for her husband Dr. Al Goldson, at her right is Dr. Bob Siegel, MD, associate director, Clinical Oncology, GWCI; Drs. Michael Seneff and Jeffrey Lin enjoy the evening's festivities; Dr. Sigal accepts the Cancer Advocacy Award; GW Alumnus Steve Friedman, cancer survivor who rode with Lance Armstrong on his Tour of Hope, accepts the Spirit of Life Award on the Tour de France winner's behalf; Mr. and Mrs. Steve Friedman attended the Gala with another GW alumnus and Tour of Hope rider Chris Houston; husbands Kenneth Rowland and Gerry Sigal celebrate their wives' Gala awards.



Cancer Public Service Award DR. ANDREW C. VON ESCHENBACH	Cancer Compassion Award ZORA BROWN
Spirit of Life Award LANCE ARMSTRONG	Cancer Advocacy Award ELLEN SIGAL, PHD
 In Memoriam DR. AL GOLDSON	

GW Merges Resources to Decipher the Urban Cancer Mystery *Looking for answers to cancer disparities*

Washington, DC, suffers from the highest overall cancer mortality rate in the United States. “It truly is a scourge,” says GW Provost and VPHA Dr. John F. Williams. “Our numbers are like third world countries.” Alarmed that some cancers seem to thrive in certain minority and underserved populations, GW established the Cancer Institute. Following are excerpts from a recent interview with Dr. Williams as he reflected on GW’s role in solving this urban puzzle.

Q: If you live in an urban area and are Black, you are more likely to get cancer than someone who is White and lives in the suburbs. Why is that?

Dr. Williams: I don’t think anybody knows why there is this disparity in cancer. There are lots of theories—some of it may be environmental, some of it may be economic and some of it may be genetic. The problem we have right now is nobody really understands whether there is a confluence of these factors or whether they are separate.

Q: How does the Cancer Institute tackle this problem?

Dr. Williams: We want to actually look at these disparities and try to tease them out one by one. If you’re working in isolation, if you’re working on just socioeconomic issues, for instance, you may be missing the clinical issues and vice versa. The unique thing about the GW Cancer Institute is that we are taking a holistic approach to cancer.

Q: Is this a unique approach?

Dr. Williams: Well, we’ve looked around the country and we’ve seen that some of the finest cancer institutes in the U.S. are going full bore at trying to figure out a cure

for a particular cancer, but one of the things we’ve noticed is that there is a great deal of talk about disparities, but few cancer centers are really focusing on disparities specifically. We decided that this would be a core mission for our Cancer Institute.

Q: How important is it to focus on Washington, DC?

Dr. Williams: We are uniquely situated in the District of Columbia. We are going to be a little more targeted toward specific cancers that occur in the District of Columbia disproportionately among people of color, and I think that is a clear path that many other cancer institutes are not taking at this time.

Q: What is the experience like from the point of view of a patient at the Cancer Institute?

Dr. Williams: When patients walk into the hospital or into the Medical Faculty Associates, they will be followed by trained professionals. We would want to know where they live, we want to get all the statistics. We want to get all of their family history—we want to take care of them in the hospital, in the clinic, and we will offer, where appropriate, drugs and chemotherapeutic agents. We will help them with follow-up care and community resources. In short, we want to help them every step of the way.



GW Researcher Links Gene to Breast Cancer

A George Washington University Medical Center team, led by Dr. Patricia Berg, has found that a new gene, BP1, discovered and cloned by Dr. Berg, is expressed in 80 percent of breast cancer patients in preliminary findings.

“Because of these high numbers and our molecular studies, we believe that this gene may offer a useful new early target for breast cancer detection and



Dr. Patricia Berg

therapy,” said Dr. Berg, who is an associate professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. “We must now conduct expedited research.”

The GW/Berg team also reported that “while the research into BP1 may

impact all groups with breast cancer in that there was an overall higher expression rate, the findings may prove especially helpful to African Americans, who disproportionately

expressed the new gene.” The rate of expression or “activation” for Caucasian women with breast cancer was 57 percent. Among African American women, it was 89 percent.

More than 1.2 million people are diagnosed with breast cancer annually, including more than 212,000 in the U.S. Breast cancer is the leading cause of death among American women aged 33 to 55. Some 40,000 American women die of the disease each year.

Spreading the Word Helps Healing Process

Lawrence Chase's diagnosis of prostate cancer was enough to shock him into a three-month silence about the disease before telling his family. Now, nearly four years later, he'll tell anyone who'll listen. The key to his conversion: knowledge.

"I heard the word 'cancer' and to me, it was like 'I'm dying.' I started crying right there in the doctor's office," said the 60 year old from his Suitland, Maryland home, just outside Washington, DC. "I couldn't bear to tell my family. But the more I learned about prostate cancer, the more I felt that there were options and that there was time."

A support group at GW for prostate cancer patients helped transform Mr. Chase from an initially reserved patient into someone who isn't afraid to spread the word to other men—and not just fellow patients—about prostate cancer and its symptoms, even though the discussion often involves touchy subjects like problems with urination and sexual function.

"I see nothing to be ashamed of," he said. "If I can tell people, I can save a life. I can make a difference."

He certainly made a difference for his eight buddies who meet to play cards every week. He broke the news of his own cancer in the middle of playing a hand.

"At first it was sort of like 'Aww, Lawrence, why'd you have to tell us that?' But two of them went on to get screened. I'm still working on the others."

Mr. Chase continues to take a conservative approach to his own illness, avoiding surgery—which can lead to sexual dysfunction and loss of bladder control—and opting instead for medication to control symptoms and slow the cancer's growth.

"Some of the doctors are a little too quick to want to cut and do surgery," he said. "For me, quality of life means a lot. It's not so much about how long you have; it's about enjoying every day."

Lawrence Chase is feeling fine at the moment, and his five children—twin boys and three daughters between the ages of 40 and 15—remain supportive. A widower since before his diagnosis, he now has a fiancé as well.

"We haven't set a date yet," he said. "But it's going to happen."

Community Offered Personalized Support to Cope with Cancer



Barbara Apsehoff, LICSW, OSW-C

Social worker Barbara Apsehoff with the Cancer Center knows all too well about the suffering associated with cancer. "Sometimes I go to work and wonder, 'does everyone in the world have cancer?' just because there is so much need." Apsehoff coordinates the many cancer support groups designed to reach out to the community.

Members aren't just patients being treated at GW. They meet once a month to talk about their disease and share feelings, new science and prognosis. In addition, five times a year, a cosmetologist comes to conduct the "Look Good, Feel Better" program for cancer patients where they get free makeovers.

GW OFFERS CANCER SUPPORT GROUPS IN:

PROSTATE CANCER

GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER

ANY CANCER DIAGNOSIS

WOMEN WITH A RECENT BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS

WOMEN WHO HAVE FINISHED BREAST CANCER TREATMENT

BRAIN TUMOR

LUNG/ESOPHAGAL CANCER

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 202-741-2218 OR BAPSELOFF@MFA.GWU.EDU

GW Breast Care Center Hosts Annual Oberstar Lecture

The National Press Club was the venue for the 13th Annual Jo Oberstar Memorial Lecture and Honors, featuring keynote speaker NBC *Today Show* weatherman Willard Scott. The Oberstar Lecture was established in 1991 by The George Washington University Medical Center and Congressman James L. Oberstar to honor the Congressman's late wife, Jo, who died of breast cancer. The lecture is a major fundraising event for the Breast Care Center and focuses on the courage of all who fight against the ravages of this disease. Serving as Master of Ceremonies was Andrea Roane of Channel 9. Roane has been a long-time supporter of the GW MFA Breast Care Center and the Mobile Mammography Program and was instrumental in publicizing its funding struggle this year—she received an Innovator in Advocacy Award, along with Elisa Reyen Portillo. Roane is active in advocating early detection of breast cancer through her Buddy Check 9 program at WUSA. Proceeds from this year's lecture will go to the GW Mammovan. Scott, a cancer survivor himself, lost his wife, Mary Dwyer Scott, to breast cancer.

Scott humored the standing room-only crowd with anecdotes about his previous jobs, including stints as Bozo



From left, Jean Lynn, MPH, RN, OCN, Willard Scott and Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN).

the Clown and the first-ever Ronald McDonald, and his work with centenarians. Regarding breast cancer, Scott said, "We can't talk about breast cancer research enough. We need to say it over and over again" to bring attention to it. Scott is donating all of the proceeds of his two most recent books to breast cancer research as his way of "giving back" and promoting new treatments.

GW Cancer Institute Targets Prevention and Control Measures

Prevention and control are the most efficacious ways to deal with cancer according to Donald Henson, MD, co-director, Office of Cancer Prevention and Control (OCPC), GW Cancer Institute (GWCI) and adjunct professor of Pathology. "And, treatment is most successful when cancer is found early."

While the OCPC's work is important year-round, it took on an added significance during April, which was designated as National Cancer Control Month and Minority Cancer Month.

OCPC's goal is to extend cancer prevention and early detection to various minority populations within the city of Washington, DC, and to address the disparities that are known in cancer care throughout the city. Cancer mortality rates are the highest in the nation among African

Americans in DC and many cancers, particularly breast and prostate cancer, begin at an earlier age in the African American population than in the Caucasian population.

"Drs. Henson and Paul Levine are doing a terrific job," says Steven R. Patierno, PhD, executive director, GWCI. "In less than one year of existence, the office has converted the mission of the OCPC into a series of achievable goals and begun implementation. Working through both the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the School of Public Health and Health Services, together with the GWU MFA and the GW Hospital, we are creating a citywide network of partners who are engaged in hands-on cancer prevention and control programs, especially in

Washington's medically underserved areas."

The OCPC is also involved in several research projects, including a study on aggressive breast disease in the African American population, access to early detection in all populations and the effect of obesity on incidence and outcome of breast cancer. In September 2003, the OCPC hosted a conference on "Breast Cancer and Racial Disparity." The conference, which attracted national attention, included a number of eminent investigators in the field of cancer disparity, including Dr. Harold Freeman, a member of the President's Cancer Panel and director of the National Cancer Institute's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities, as the keynote speaker.

GW to Host Prostate Cancer Conference in September *NCI Director to Headline Event*

The GW Cancer Institute will host the second seminar in its cancer disparities conference series when it convenes “Prostate Cancer Disparities: Science, Healthcare and Public Policy” on September 20 and 21 at the Park Hyatt in Washington, DC. This conference follows last year’s successful Breast Cancer Disparities Conference put on by the GW Cancer Institute, an urban oncology center dedicated to understanding cancer disparities.

The goal of the conference is to focus on why prostate cancer is more deadly and often more aggressive in minority men. Everything from the genetic and biological factors involved to the healthcare implications of prostate cancer disparities will be examined.

Keynoting the event will be Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, director of the National Cancer Institute. He will highlight the issue of cancer disparities from the National Cancer Institute’s perspective. Dr. von



Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach

Eschenbach was recently honored by the GW Cancer Institute at its Gala in April with the presentation of the Outstanding Public Service Award.

Building on the momentum from last year’s Breast Cancer Disparities conference, GW Cancer Institute Executive Director Dr. Steven Patierno hopes the conference will encourage a healthy two-day discussion of the topic while educating at the same time.

“There are many scientists at our own Institute and others who are looking at this problem. Our goal is to get them to this conference, to share information and also to educate the media and the public about prostate cancer disparities.”

After the keynote, the conference will examine the rates and patterns of prostate cancer to help the audience glean an overall picture of the disparities involved with this particular cancer. Then, a panel on risk factors will examine their role in disparities. Also up for discussion will be biological and genetic factors and how they play into prostate cancer. The final roundtable will focus on the public policy challenges of reducing disparities. Noted scientists from other institutions deeply involved in cancer disparity research in addition to GW, public policy experts, legislative experts and an array of speakers will be participating.

GWCI Hosts Inflammatory Breast Cancer Symposium

Nearly 100 patients and family members attended a symposium hosted by the GW Cancer Institute (GWCI) with the Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Foundation in Ross Hall on Friday, April 30. The title of the symposium was “Inflammatory Breast Cancer: Historic Perspective and Current Status. It focused on the latest developments and scientific discoveries related to this terribly aggressive form of breast cancer.

GWCI Executive Director Steven Patierno, PhD, opened the conference along with Owen Johnson, president of the IBC Research Foundation. GW cancer researcher Dr. Paul Levine was one of the plenary speakers. Dr. Levine spoke about the IBC Registry and was followed by presentations from Dr. Sandra Swain and Dr. William

Anderson of the National Cancer Institute; and Dr. Laszlo Boros of Harbor UCLA. Updates were given on the Clinical Trials Initiative and the IBC Research Project.

Dr. Patierno made a plea for more research and resources to be focused specifically on inflammatory breast cancer in comments aimed directly at the survivors.

“I honor you for being here as true ‘survivors.’ I hope this meeting will serve to underscore the need for better education about this unique form of breast cancer, for all women and for the physicians who diagnose and treat IBC. I also hope this meeting will promote the need for increased resources and research, to be directed at this misunderstood and very dangerous form of breast cancer.”

Killer Lung Cancer Merits More Attention

Lung cancer kills more women each year than breast cancer and lung cancer kills more men than prostate cancer. Yet, says Dr. David Carbone, lung cancer, which is responsible for more than 30 percent of all cancer deaths, doesn't get the attention it deserves, all because it is perceived that it is a self-inflicted disease.

Dr. Carbone, director of the Experimental Therapeutics Program and the SPORE in Lung Cancer at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC), keyed the GW Cancer Institute's Spring Distinguished Lecture series. In addition to his review of the fatality of lung cancer, he discussed molecular profiling and proteomics of non-small cell lung cancer. Dr. Carbone stressed that lung cancer is complex, and more predictive prognostics are needed to diagnose and treat lung cancer early—the cure rate for early-stage lung cancer is between 80 and 90 percent.

He reviewed his research on the genes involved in the progressive



Dr. David Carbone

development of lung cancer and how a specific gene mutation can explain why the new molecularly targeted drug (Iressa) has dramatic positive effects on some patients and not others. Dr. Carbone noted a study just released in *The New England Journal of Medicine* that indicates that the 10 percent of lung cancer

patients who respond to the drug carry a mutation in the EGFR gene. Dr. Carbone related that "this could be the single most important finding relating lung cancer genetics to therapeutics."

Dr. Carbone discussed further advances in technology related to tumor and serum proteomic profiling to detect lung cancer early on, thus improving the chances for survival.

"Even though the number of new cases of lung cancer is not as great as the number of new cases of breast and prostate cancer," says Dr. Steven Patierno, executive director of the GW Cancer Institute, "the number of deaths is greater. Only 14 percent of those people who walk in the door with lung cancer will survive." As noted by Dr. Carbone, "we may have an opportunity to dramatically improve these numbers, given the findings of this study and the profiling of genes and proteins that may be biomarkers for early cancer detection."

THE GW CANCER INSTITUTE CHRONICLES

is published through the GWUMC
Office of Communications and
Marketing, 2300 Eye Street NW, Ross
313, Washington, DC 20037
202-994-8110, mcmlb@gwumc.edu

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