

PEOPLE



Fox Chase Cancer Center

Richard I. Fisher, MD, has been named president and CEO of Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, PA, which is part of the Temple University Health System, and will also hold the title of cancer center director of Fox Chase. He succeeds Michael Seiden, MD, PhD.

Before joining Fox Chase as its executive vice president in March, Fisher was vice president for strategic and program development and a professor of medicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center. In addition, he served as director of the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry and director of cancer services for the Strong Health System, all in Rochester, NY.

Fisher has held several national leadership positions in oncology. For the past 28 years, he served as chair of the Lymphoma Committee of SWOG. He has also served as chair of the Lymphoma Research Foundation Scientific Advisory Board and as a member of the National Cancer Institute's Lymphoma Steering Committee.



Roswell Park Memorial Institute

Margaret K. Offermann, MD, PhD, began a 1-year term as president of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) on July 1. A federation of 27 life sciences

organizations that collectively have more than 100,000 members, FASEB strives to improve health by promoting education in biologic and biomedical sciences and by advocating for the biomedical research community in Washington, DC.

Offermann is a managing partner at the Salutramed Group, Inc., a consulting firm for life sciences companies in Atlanta, GA. Previously, she was deputy national vice president for research at the American Cancer Society. She has also been a professor of hematology and oncology at Atlanta's Emory University School of Medicine and associate director of its Winship Cancer Institute.

HPV Vaccine May Provide Oral Protection

The first clinical trial to investigate the effectiveness of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination against oral infections suggests that the vaccine prevents such infections, which can promote head and neck cancers. However, researchers caution that whether the vaccine cuts the risk of these cancers remains to be determined.

Oropharyngeal cancers triggered by HPV, particularly by the high-risk subtypes 16 and 18, have surged in recent decades. In 2011, a study led by Maura Gillison, MD, PhD, of Ohio State University in Columbus, reported that the incidence of oropharyngeal cancers testing positive for HPV increased by 225% between 1988 and 2004 (*J Clin Oncol* 2011;29:4294–301). Although researchers have found that HPV vaccination curbs infections and precancerous lesions at several body sites, including the cervix, they lack comparable data for the oropharynx.

The new work is an offshoot of a large project designed to gauge how well vaccination guards against HPV infections and precancerous lesions in the cervix. More than 7,000 women in Costa Rica received either a vaccine against HPV subtypes 16 and 18 (Cervarix; GlaxoSmithKline) or a control vaccine against hepatitis A. After the study had begun, the organizers decided to test for oral infections and obtained samples of oropharyngeal cells from nearly 6,000 of the participants.

“What is striking is that there seems to be a strong effect of the vaccine,” says lead author Rolando Herrero, PhD, of the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyon, France. Four years after the injections, only one of the more than 2,900 women who received the HPV vaccine showed an oral HPV infection, whereas 15 of the more than 2,900 subjects in the control group did. That's a 93% lower incidence in the HPV-vaccinated group, the team reported (*PLoS ONE* 2013;8:e68329).

Stephen Goldstone, MD, of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, NY, who wasn't involved with the research, says the study has “a clear-cut positive result.”

Because the researchers didn't set out to test the vaccine's effects against oral infections, they couldn't determine if any subjects already had such infections at the beginning of the study. That means the vaccine could be even more potent than the results indicate, Goldstone says.

Ohio State's Gillison, who also didn't participate in the Costa Rica study, notes that researchers still need to determine whether preventing HPV oral infections forestalls oropharyngeal cancer. “It's a very good study, but it falls short of being able to make public policy recommendations,” she says. ■

University of Kentucky Gains NCI Designation

Kentucky, which ranks first in the nation for cancer mortality and second for cancer incidence, is now home to a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center—the University of Kentucky's (UK) Markey Cancer Center.

Awarded in July, the recognition means that the Markey Cancer Center will annually receive up to \$1.5 million in additional federal funding, and its ability to attract grants and other monies will be bolstered. In addition, patients will be able to access treatments and clinical trials available only at NCI-designated cancer centers. The UK Markey Cancer Center becomes the 68th medical center in the country to receive the distinction.

Earning the designation has been a lengthy process involving the improvement of many of the facilities and research programs at Markey, says Mark Evers, MD, the center's director. “Luckily, we've had a tremendous amount of institutional and community support,” he says.

Since 2009, the cancer center has raised over \$100 million to construct 20,000 square feet of state-of-the-art research space, upgrade clinical facilities, and recruit 35 new faculty members.

Strong cancer screening and prevention programs helped the Markey Cancer Center achieve its new status. Many of these programs target the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky, which has some of the highest

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