

Leadership Announcement – Division Chief of the Division of Oncology and Deputy Director of Siteman Cancer Center



It is my pleasure to announce that **Daniel C. Link, MD**, has been named the new Chief of the Division of Oncology in the Department of Medicine and Deputy Director of the Siteman Cancer Center (SCC) effective December 1, 2022. Dr. Link is the Alan A. and Edith L. Wolff Distinguished Professor of Medicine in the Division of Oncology in the Department of Medicine and Professor of Pathology and Immunology at Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM).

Dr. Link is a long-standing and valued member of the Washington University community. He completed his residency at Barnes Hospital and his fellowship in Hematology-Oncology here at WUSM. He joined the faculty in 1993, and became Professor of Medicine in 2008. Dr. Link led the successful effort to obtain a SPORE in Leukemia at Washington University in 2013. This SPORE was recently renewed in 2018, receiving one of the best scores for any SPORE that year. He has served as co-leader of the Hematopoiesis Development and Malignancy Program of the Siteman Cancer Center (SCC) since 2005, and is a member of the SCC senior leadership. Dr. Link recently served as Chair of the Myeloid Biology Scientific Committee of the American Society of Hematology, and is a member of the executive board of the Severe Chronic Neutropenia International Registry. He is a standing member of the Hemostasis, Thrombosis, Blood Cells, and Transfusion Medicine study section, and has served on the Editorial Boards of Blood and Leukemia. Dr. Link's research over the past 25 years has focused on characterizing mechanisms regulating normal and malignant hematopoiesis. This has resulted over 150 peer reviewed original research papers and 42 reviews, commentaries or book chapters.

Dr. Link is an outstanding mentor for fellows, post docs and junior faculty. He has served as a mentor to 46 pre- or post-doctoral trainees, several of whom have established independent laboratories. His commitment to mentoring and developing the next generation of scientists is evidenced by receipt of the Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award and Distinguished Faculty Award for Graduate Student Teaching at Washington University. In 2015, Dr. Link received the Washington University School of Medicine Alumni Faculty Achievement Award.

For most of Dr. Link's career, his focus has been on basic/translational research, which continues to be a priority. Over the past 10 years, he has helped to develop the hematopoietic malignancy program at Washington University into one of the top programs in the country. At SCC, Dr. Link chairs the strategic planning committee for hematopoietic malignancies program that includes clinical operations, basic and clinical research, education, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. To ensure that junior faculty in the Division of Oncology receive optimal mentoring and career development, he developed a popular work-in-progress program where each junior faculty member (both basic and clinical) presents to a panel of senior faculty to obtain career and research advice. As principal investigator for the Leukemia SPORE, Dr. Link developed a post-baccalaureate pipeline program for trainees traditionally underrepresented in medicine and science to engage in leukemia-related research. Plans are in place to expand this program to include other cancer-related research. These experiences inspired Dr. Link's interest in pursuing a leadership position in order to continue to build upon the outstanding research, clinical, and training programs in the Division. Dr. Link is an exceptional physician-scientist with tremendous leadership skills who was chosen to be the division chief after an extensive national search.

I am also pleased to announce that **Ramaswamy Govindan, MD**, the Anheuser-Busch Endowed Chair in Medical Oncology and Director of the Section of Medical Oncology will be appointed as Associate Chief of the Division of Oncology.



Dr. Govindan did his residency and chief residency at Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research in India, followed by a second residency at Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago. He came to Washington University in 1993, where he completed a fellowship in Hematology-Oncology. Dr. Govindan joined the WUSM faculty in 1998 and established the thoracic oncology program at Washington University.

Dr. Govindan is an internationally recognized thoracic medical oncologist. An expert in developing prognostic biomarkers in patients with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), Dr. Govindan led the first study highlighting the stark differences in genomic alterations between lung adenocarcinomas from smokers and nonsmokers. He led The NCI Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) project to characterize genomic alterations in NSCLC. He also led the first genomic study characterizing mechanisms of treatment resistance in small cell lung cancer. He has served as the Principal Investigator for several national and international clinical trials in lung cancer, including the largest lung cancer biomarker trial (ALCHEMIST trial) and the trial that led to the recent FDA approval of the first-in-class drug to target *KRAS* mutations in lung cancer. Dr. Govindan is the PI of the NCI-funded Washington University Paul Calabresi Career Development Award for Clinical Oncology (K12), an important career development program in patient-oriented cancer research. Dr. Govindan's research is currently supported by several NCI grants including two U01s, a U24, and a U54. He has published over 380 papers, including several in high impact journals such as *NEJM*, *Cell*, and *Nature*. He has mentored several residents and fellows who have become national leaders in thoracic oncology. Dr. Govindan is an exceptionally caring and compassionate physician. He is an outstanding clinical and translational investigator with extensive administrative and clinical operations experience who will be an important part of Dr. Link's executive leadership team.



I also want to recognize and extend my sincere gratitude to **John F. DiPersio, MD, PhD**, the Virginia E. and Sam J. Golman Professor of Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and of Pathology and Immunology, for his exceptional leadership as the inaugural Oncology Division Chief and outstanding contributions as the Deputy Director of Siteman Cancer Center. Under Dr. DiPersio's leadership, the Division of Oncology has grown dramatically. Dr. DiPersio strategically built outstanding clinical programs at BJH, WUSM, and across the region by recruiting and developing exceptional clinical and scientific faculty, mentoring fellows and physician-scientists, and developing a robust and nationally recognized clinical trials program. Under his leadership, the faculty grew from 8 to 136, clinical programs grew from a single site to 17 regional clinical care sites, and the research portfolio grew to over \$40M last year. The educational programs have flourished under his leadership with a strong fellowship program, longstanding and successful T32 program, impressive pipeline of physician-scientists, and numerous junior faculty with career development awards and transitions to independent R01-funded careers. Dr. DiPersio's visionary leadership enabled the development of multiple, very successful chemotherapy infusion sites aligned with specialty and research-focused pharmacies to optimize patient care. Dr. DiPersio is an internationally recognized expert in hematologic malignancies, Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation, Graft vs Host Disease, and cellular and immunotherapies. He has received numerous

honors and awards including serving as President of the American Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and serving on the NCI Scientific Council. his own research has been extremely productive, leading to innovative new discoveries in the pathogenesis of acute leukemia and methods to improve bone marrow transplantation including novel methods to improve stem cell mobilization for bone marrow transplantation, better understanding of the pathophysiology of Graft vs Host Disease, and use of new cellular and gene therapies to improve outcomes in patients with leukemia and lymphoma. Dr. DiPersio is currently funded by a prestigious R35 NCI Outstanding Investigator Award, an NIH U award, and a SCC SIP award. Within the Division, he is also the Director of the Center for Gene and Cellular Immunotherapy, which was formed to accelerate immuno-oncology research. Dr. DiPersio is known as an extraordinarily compassionate and knowledgeable physician, who is beloved by his patients suffering from hematologic malignancies. We are all incredibly grateful to Dr. DiPersio for his outstanding leadership and vision in building the Oncology Division to its current premier status.

Dr. Link is exceptionally qualified to take on this new role. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Link on his new position as the Division Chief of the Division of Oncology in the Department of Medicine and Deputy Director of Siteman Cancer Center. Please also congratulate **Dr. Govindan** on his appointment as Associate Chief of the Division of Oncology.



Victoria J. Fraser, MD (*pronouns: she/her/hers, [why do I have this here?](#)*)

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Remember "The ultimate measure of a person is not where he/she stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he/she stands at times of challenge and controversy." Martin Luther King, Jr.

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