

Leaders' Update

A message from Dr. Laura Siminoff, associate director for cancer prevention and control

Cancer prevention and control (CPC) research at Massey stretches across the entire cancer continuum, from healthy people (prevention) to individuals who are at the last stages of their battle with this disease (end of life). Our research is focused on studying the behavioral, environmental, organizational and policy factors that affect cancer risk, diagnosis, treatment and survival.

One of the missions of Massey Cancer Center is fostering substantial trans-disciplinary collaboration that bridges CPC, laboratory and clinical research. This is the hallmark of a National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center and one of the ways that we make advances in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. For example, inter-programmatic research involving CPC and clinical investigators include assessing patient-reported outcomes such as symptoms and side effects of treatments, incorporating quality of life measures in therapeutic cancer clinical trials and measuring the number of work hours lost during chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

To help support inter-programmatic collaboration between CPC and other cancer center research programs, Massey recently added a new developing shared resource core known as the Patient/Community-Centered Outcomes Research Core (PC-COC). Led by CPC program members Richard Brown, Ph.D., and Levent Dumenci, Ph.D., the core addresses the need to evaluate a broad range of outcomes associated with patient-centeredness (health care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs and values) at the clinician, patient and health services levels. Available for use by all Massey members, the PC-COC aims to facilitate inter-programmatic research that incorporates patient/community-centered outcomes, promote the inclusion of patient/community-centered outcomes during the pre-award developmental phase of studies, especially clinical trials, and assist Massey investigators in incorporating patient/community-centered outcomes through qualitative, quantitative and multi-method research protocols, such as moderating focus groups, interviewing individual subjects, extracting data from cancer registries and pilot testing interventions. [Learn more about the PC-COC shared resource.](#)

Assisting researchers in developing and successfully conducting their studies is one of the goals of the CPC program. Grant funding is available to support inter-programmatic research collaborations with a CPC component and can help to jump start new and innovative research initiatives at a time when NIH funding is increasingly more competitive. CPC leadership helps to identify and assist with alternative sources of funding. One such funding source is the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), an independent, nonprofit organization authorized by Congress to fund research that provides patients, their caregivers and clinicians with evidence-based information needed to make informed health care decisions. VCU has been awarded several PCORI grants, and I currently chair one of the PCORI study sections. [Learn more about PCORI](#) and how your research might be appropriate for this new funding mechanism.

Finally, I want to share that on March 1, I will be taking a new position at Temple University as dean of the College of Health Professions and Social Work. It's been a pleasure and honor to work with all of you at Massey, and I hope to continue to collaborate with you on research from afar. Cathy Bradley, Ph.D., co-leader for the Cancer Prevention and Control research program, will assume the role of associate director for cancer prevention and control at Massey after my departure. Jennifer Elston-Lafata, Ph.D., will continue to ably serve the CPC program as the program leader, and Massey will work to identify a new co-leader for her. Stay tuned for an update.

This is an exciting time for cancer prevention and control research at Massey. Please visit the [Massey website](#) for more information about CPC research.

Regards,

Laura A. Siminoff, Ph.D.

Associate director for cancer prevention and control