



New Cancer Research Effort to Benefit Texans

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Galveston – A research initiative that will impact clinical cancer care for Texans is underway. But unlike similar initiatives, the results of this one will be shared with a much broader audience and not just researchers and physicians.

This research is exploring important questions about screening patients for certain cancers. It will also examine the quality of cancer treatments patients are receiving, and the quality of follow-up treatment and supportive care provided.

Additionally, it is committed to communicating the findings of this work statewide – to the general public, cancer survivors, healthcare professionals and policymakers.

This initiative is called CERCIT – Comparative Effectiveness Research on Cancer in Texas. It combines the expertise of faculty and resources at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), MD Anderson Cancer Center, the University of Texas School of Public Health, Rice University, Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Department of State Health Services Texas Cancer Registry.

The program website at <http://www.txcercit.org/> includes links and articles on its projects and findings.

CERCIT is funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, a Texas voter-approved program that is investing \$3 billion in cancer research over the next 10 years.

This research addresses several goals of the Texas Cancer Plan – a plan which aims to reduce the burden of cancer across the state and improve the lives of Texans.

The Plan is a statewide blueprint for cancer prevention and control that will help inform and guide communities in the fight against cancer. It is being developed and implemented by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute (CPRIT).

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The goals CERCIT addresses are to 1) enhance existing cancer data systems; 2) use quality data to support outcome-driven cancer control planning and evaluation, and 3) increase knowledge and awareness of issues impacting cancer survivors. Each of these goals includes a commitment to communicating findings to the general public, cancer survivors, healthcare professionals, policymakers, planners and researchers.

The CERCIT project is examining patterns, quality and outcomes of all aspects of cancer care – from screening to evaluation to treatment to supportive care and post treatment surveillance. To do this, researchers are linking data from the Texas Cancer Registry to Medicare and Medicaid claims for Texas residents.

A key feature of the CERCIT research project is that it uses a comparative effectiveness research (CER) approach.

This relatively new research approach defined by the Institute of Medicine develops and evaluates evidence comparing the benefits and harms of different methods to prevent, diagnose, treat and monitor a clinical condition or improve the care patients receive. The comparative effective research approach is designed to help patients, their doctors, other clinicians, and policymakers make informed decisions that will improve health care both for individuals and the public.

“What is unique about this type of research is that it cannot be done in ivory-towered universities using carefully selected populations, but must be done in the wider community, using real patients under real-life conditions to identify what works and what doesn't and where resources are needed and where they are in excess,” said CERCIT Director Dr. James Goodwin.

“That means sharing this information is one of the most serious parts of our mission, for without dissemination, comparative effectiveness research is of limited value to cancer patients, their families, their doctors and the public at large. In this way, our research will benefit all Texans,” added Goodwin, who is director of the Sealy Center on Aging at UTMB.

Visit the CERCIT website at www.txcercit.org to learn more about comparative effectiveness research and CERCIT's projects.

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