INSTITUTION SPOTLIGHT
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Aurora NCORP will continue to play a leading role in bringing innovative clinical trials to patients. As part of the merged Advocate Aurora Health, Wisconsin-based Aurora Health Care recently accepted a six-year $10.2 million National Cancer Institute (NCI) Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP) grant, the largest research grant in the health system’s history (National Institutes of Health award number 2UG1CA190140-06).

The grant will help the community site expand its NCI clinical trials, including ECOG-ACRIN trials, to 13 local cancer clinics, bringing Aurora NCORP’s total number of sites to 31 throughout Illinois and Wisconsin. Aurora merged with Illinois-based Advocate Health Care in 2018 to form one of the 10 largest not-for-profit health systems in the country.

Aurora NCORP, led by two co-principal investigators – Thomas Saphner, MD, and Michael Thompson, MD, PhD – now supports more than 100 investigators and nearly 100 research team members, including research coordinators, managers and regulatory specialists.

This new grant recognition builds on Aurora's initial five-year NCORP funding award. During the initial five-year grant, Aurora NCORP opened 78 new NCI trials that enrolled more than 1,200 participants.

Aurora NCORP’s expansion across Illinois and Wisconsin ensures that patients living in Advocate Aurora Health communities will continue to have opportunities to access the latest investigational oncology treatments available from ECOG-ACRIN. For example, hematologist and oncologist Shamsuddin Virani, MD, is the nation’s top enroller in the ECOG-ACRIN/NHLBI National Myelodysplastic Syndromes Study, and three of the top five enrolling sites in the study belong to Aurora NCORP.

Aligned with NCI’s mission, the expansion of Aurora NCORP also makes certain that oncology research is conducted in “real world” communities, which contributes to findings that are generalizable and effective in improving health outcomes and reducing disparities for patients across the country.

Aurora NCORP supports 18 Wisconsin cancer clinics across eastern Wisconsin, as far north as Marinette and as far south as Kenosha. The 13 Advocate cancer clinics joining Aurora NCORP span northeastern Illinois, from Advocate Children’s Hospital-Oak Lawn on Chicagoland’s south side to Advocate Condell Medical Center, Libertyville in the north Chicago metropolitan area. The Illinois sites include a children’s hospital with two campuses, which will enable Aurora NCORP to participate in pediatric clinical trials. Of these 13 new sites, 10 are first-time members of ECOG-ACRIN. Sigrun Hallmeyer, MD, serves as the principal investigator for the Advocate locations.

Although new to NCORP, Advocate has participated in hundreds of NCI clinical trials. Likewise, Aurora has been offering best-in-class care through cancer clinical trials for years. Our clinical trial participation helps provide more options to patients to achieve the best possible results.

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