ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM AND DR. COMIS

The ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group (ECOG-ACRIN) hosts the **Robert L. Comis, MD Translational Science Symposium** at its semiannual Group Meetings. This plenary symposium is open to all attendees. The overall goal of the event is to seed ideas for ECOG-ACRIN's various scientific committees to explore within and across its scientific programs. Each symposium offers a focused examination of a particular field of scientific opportunity.

Robert L. Comis, MD was an innovative researcher who recognized the potential for translational research to advance cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. Some of the most important national late-stage clinical trials were conducted under his leadership of the Group (1995-2017). He spearheaded scores of scientific discoveries that changed clinical practice across multiple types of cancer. ECOG-ACRIN is pleased to honor him through this event.

Dr. Comis' interest in oncology began early in his career at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) when he was sent to Uganda to provide chemotherapy to children suffering from Burkitt's lymphoma. After a fellowship at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, he embarked on a career focused on lung cancer and developmental therapeutics. He built centers of excellence in the research and treatment of cancer, first in Syracuse then at Fox Chase Cancer Center and Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia.

Dr. Comis envisioned the merger that resulted in the ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group in 2012. He led the effort to coalesce the new group into what it is today: a scientific community of researchers in cancer biology, immunology, therapeutics, molecular and imaging diagnostics, and comparative effectiveness and patient-reported outcomes research, as well as bioinformatics and biostatistical expertise.

A giant in the field, he was a tireless advocate for patient access to trials and a champion for underserved populations. As a mentor, he helped launch many careers by fostering scientific inquiry among early-career oncologists. Many of his trainees are now leaders in the field, and will carry on his legacy.

ROBERT L. COMIS, MD TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

Application of Technology in Studying Tumor Evolution and Targeting Different Types of Tumors

Tuesday, May 13, 2025
3:00-5:00 pm
JW Marriott Tampa
Water Street

AGENDA

3:00-3:05 pm	Welcome	Peter J. O'Dwyer, MD and Mitchell D. Schnall, MD, PhD *ECOG-ACRIN,* *University of Pennsylvania*

Segment 1: Introduction and Overview of General Strategies for Circulating Markers

3:05-3:15 pm	Tumor-Informed and Tumor-Uninformed ctDNA Approaches for Minimal Residual Disease Detection	Charu Aggarwal, MD, MPH *University of Pennsylvania,* *Abramson Cancer Center*

Segment 2: Latest Technology

3:15-3:30 pm	Applications of Circulating Marker Technology: Capabilities and Limitations	Gad A. Getz, PhD *Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard*

Segment 3: Real World Examples

3:30-3:45 pm	Integration of Circulating Markers into Clinical Trial Design; Methodology, Challenges, and Benefits of Incorporating Circulating Markers	Dustin A. Deming, MD *University of Wisconsin,* *UW Carbone Cancer Center*

Segment 4: Future Thinking

4:00-4:15 pm	Design Considerations for a Trial in MRD-Positive Patients Following Initiation of Conventional Adjuvant Therapy	Peter J. O'Dwyer, MD *ECOG-ACRIN,* *University of Pennsylvania*

Segment 5: Panel Discussion – David A. Mankoff, MD, PhD Moderator

4:15-5:00 pm	**Panel:** Charu Aggarwal, MD, MPH, Barbara Burtness, MD, Dustin Deming, MD, Gad Getz, PhD,

SPEAKERS

Mitchell D. Schnall, MD, PhD
ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group/University of Pennsylvania
Dr. Schnall is the group co-chair of the ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group. He is the Senior Vice President for Data and Technology Solutions for the University of Pennsylvania Health System, since 2024, following two terms as chair of the Department of Radiology at the Perelman School of Medicine, where he is the Eugene P. Pendergrass Professor of Radiology. He is a physician at Penn Medicine within its Abdominal Imaging Services program. Dr. Schnall was one of the architects of the merger that formed ECOG-ACRIN in 2012. He is an international leader in translational biomedical and imaging research, working throughout his career across the interface between basic imaging science and clinical medicine to ensure effective integration of radiology research with other medical disciplines. His work has led to fundamental changes in the imaging approaches to breast and prostate cancer, and he continues to have a significant influence on emerging imaging technologies, including those in optical imaging.

SPEAKERS

Charu Aggarwal, MD, MPH
University of Pennsylvania/Abramson Cancer Center
Dr. Aggarwal is the Leslye Heisler Professor for Lung Cancer Excellence at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, where she also serves as section chief of Thoracic and Head and Neck Oncology in the Division of Hematology-Oncology. An internationally recognized expert in precision medicine and thoracic oncology, Dr. Aggarwal specializes in the management of patients with lung cancer, with a research focus on biomarker discovery, liquid biopsy strategies, and the development of novel immunotherapeutic and targeted approaches. Dr. Aggarwal has been at the forefront of integrating liquid biopsy into clinical practice, pioneering approaches for molecular profiling, minimal residual disease detection, and real-time disease monitoring to optimize patient outcomes. She leads patient-centered clinical trials that have shaped personalized treatment paradigms. She also serves as associate director of the Penn Center for Precision Medicine and director of precision medicine innovation at the Penn Center for Cancer Care Innovation, where she leads strategic initiatives to implement cutting-edge technologies, including liquid biopsy platforms, into routine cancer care. Her work bridges scientific discovery and clinical application, driving innovation to deliver on the promise of individualized cancer therapies.

Barbara A. Burtness, MD
Yale University/Yale Cancer Center
Dr. Burtness is the Anthony N. Brady Professor of Medicine at Yale University, chief translational research officer at Yale Cancer Center and Smilow Cancer Hospital, and associate cancer center director for translational research at Yale Cancer Center. She serves as co-leader of the Developmental Therapeutics Program, division chief for Head and Neck/Sarcoma Oncology, and director of the Yale Head and Neck Specialized Program of Research Excellence. Dr. Burtness is internationally recognized for her research in head and neck cancer and leads national and international trials of targeted therapy. At ECOG-ACRIN, she chairs the Head and Neck Cancer Committee and the Task Force on Career Advancement.

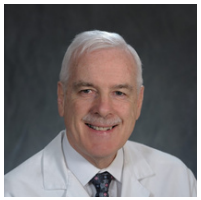
SPEAKERS

Dustin A. Deming, MD
University of Wisconsin/UW Carbone Cancer Center
Dr. Deming is the ACI/Schwenn Family Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Departments of Medicine and Oncology, and the Carbone Cancer Center. He is a gastrointestinal medical oncologist with a subspecialty focus in colorectal cancer and is an early-age onset rectal cancer survivor himself. At the cancer center, he leads the Precision Medicine Molecular Tumor Board, JD Fluno Family Colorectal Cancer Precision Medicine Program, and the Developmental Therapeutics Program. He is also the chair of the ECOG-ACRIN Developmental Therapeutics Committee. His research aims to develop innovative treatment strategies for cancers depending on the molecular profile and tumor microenvironment characteristics. His laboratory has developed novel preclinical models, including patient-derived cancer organoid models and transgenic and syngeneic transplantable murine models. His clinical research is investigating the use of ctDNA to guide therapeutics in the adjuvant setting and to sequence therapies in the metastatic setting.

Gad A. Getz, PhD
Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard/Mass General Cancer Center
Dr. Getz is an internationally acclaimed leader in cancer genomics and is pioneering widely used tools for analyzing cancer genomes. He is a core institute member of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, where he directs the Cancer Genome Computational Analysis Group. He is a professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School and a faculty member and director of bioinformatics in the Krantz Family Center for Cancer Research and Department of Pathology at Mass General Cancer Center. He is also the inaugural incumbent of the Paul C. Zamecnik Chair in Oncology at the Krantz Family Center for Cancer Research at Mass General Cancer Center. He has published numerous papers in prominent journals describing new methodologies to study cancer genomes that have identified new genes and pathways involved in different tumor types, mutational signatures, and tumor evolution.

SPEAKERS

David A. Mankoff, MD, PhD
University of Pennsylvania/Abramson Cancer Center
Dr. Mankoff is the Matthew J. Wilson Professor and vice chair for research in the Radiology Department at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine. He also serves as the associate director for education and training for Penn's Abramson Cancer Center. Dr. Mankoff's research focuses on molecular imaging of cancer, primarily on breast cancer, and emphasizes therapeutic monitoring and identifying factors mediating therapeutic resistance and translation of new methods to clinical trials. He also focuses on quantitative imaging methods related to molecular cancer imaging. Key research achievements include defining applications of FDG PET to breast cancer staging and response evaluation, translating novel tracers to early human trials, studying the in vivo biology of cancer metabolism, and imaging estrogen receptor expression in breast cancer using PET. At ECOG-ACRIN, he co-chairs the Scientific Planning Committee and is the former chair of the Experimental Imaging Sciences Working Group.



Peter J. O'Dwyer, MD
ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group/University of Pennsylvania
Dr. O'Dwyer is the group co-chair of the ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group. A medical oncologist with expertise in gastrointestinal and pancreatic cancers, Dr. O'Dwyer is a physician at Penn Medicine and a professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the CEO and chair of the PrECOG, LLC Board of Managers, president of the ECOG-ACRIN Medical Research Foundation, and president of the ECOG Research and Education Foundation. Dr. O'Dwyer's research focuses on novel therapy development, primarily in pancreatic and colorectal cancers. He previously led the Developmental Therapeutics Programs at Fox Chase Cancer Center and the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. O'Dwyer has more than 350 scientific papers in medical literature and participates in numerous national and international organizations. He co-chaired the landmark NCI-MATCH precision medicine cancer trial.