



Leaders' Update

A message from Bernard Fuemmeler, associate director for cancer prevention and control

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to give an update on cancer prevention and control research at Massey. A lot has happened since my last letter a year and half ago. As you may have heard by now our cancer center had a very successful review by the NCI this past year. Our CPC program received an “Outstanding” evaluation, which is the best score for our CPC program in Massey’s history. This is an acknowledgement of your innovative and high impact research and of our outstanding leaders, Drs. Darlene Brunzell and Vanessa Sheppard, who represented the program exceptionally well during the review and continue to do so on a daily basis.

Over the next few years I look forward to working with our program leaders as they help our members continue to advance their exceptional research and further strengthen our NCI and cancer-related funding portfolio. We have many assets within our program, including top-notch research in tobacco control and regulation, cancer health services and outcomes, decision making around genetic testing, pain management, palliative care, and obesity and cancer, to name a few. As we move forward over the next 5 years it will be important for us to strengthen our capacity in three areas. First, we must look for new opportunities to bridge our expertise with the expertise of members from other programs (e.g., Cancer Cell Signaling, Cancer Molecular Genetics and Developmental Therapeutics). Second, it will also be important for us to demonstrate how our research can improve the health of our regional and state communities. Finally, our program must grow to expand research in areas related to health disparities and cancer survivorship. By broadening our achievements in these areas, I believe we will continue our upward trajectory.

To support these efforts we are developing new funding mechanisms and organizing working groups and meetings of which we hope you will take advantage. One small-scale funding mechanism is the newly initiated Research Accelerator Monies Award (CPC RAMS Award) to support new interdisciplinary collaborations. Last month we issued the first CPC RAMS Award to Drs. Nao Hagiwara and Tiffany Green for their proposal, “Perceived Discrimination and Obesity/Overweight Among Hispanic Immigrants.” The funding will help support a pilot project assessing the extent to which

structural factors and perceived discrimination relate to risk for obesity among Hispanic immigrants within our catchment area. Other new funding opportunities will be announced soon, so please stay tuned!

In addition to expanding funding opportunities we are also planning working groups and meetings to help support collaborative ventures. One of our regularly scheduled meetings is our CPC seminar series held on the second Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 pm in the Goodwin Research Laboratory Thalhimer Conference Room. We typically have a mix of invited speakers and program members present at these meetings so it is a good opportunity to catch up on current research within the field and here at Massey. We also have three upcoming events: 1) a disparities retreat on February 12, 2018 (time and location to be announced), featuring keynote speaker Dr. Rick Kitchens, associate director of health equities at City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center; 2) an Obesity and Cancer Summit will be held on March 15, 2018, at 8am-1pm (location to be announced), featuring keynote speaker Dr. Stephen D. Hursting, professor in the Department of Nutrition at the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and 3) the Massey CPC Retreat, which will follow the Obesity and Cancer Summit at 1-5 pm on March 15, 2018 (location to be announced). These are great occasions to connect with other researchers and scientists in our program and across the center, and I look forward to your active participation at these upcoming events.

Thank you for your contributions to advancing cancer prevention and control research at Massey. The excellent work you are doing is being recognized at the highest levels. As always, please feel free to reach out to me if you have questions about the program, are looking for new collaborations or if there is some way we might be able to help facilitate your research.

Sincerely,

Bernard Fuemmeler, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Associate director for cancer prevention and control