# American Cancer Society Awards Research Professorships

Four leading cancer investigators are recipients of the American Cancer Society research professorship, a lifelong designation accompanied by a five-year award totaling $400,000. The awards are the most prestigious research grants made by the American Cancer Society's Extramural Grants program. Two are new awardees and two are renewals of previous professorships. The grants begin on September 1, 2020.

> *"In the current challenging fundraising environment, it is gratifying to be able to make these awards to these highly esteemed investigators, who continue to break new ground, mentor future leaders, and lead the way in cancer research"*

The new awardees are:

- **Dawn Hershman, M.D., Columbia University**:Dr. Hershman's seminal contributions to cancer have been identifying factors that are associated with suboptimal anti-cancer therapy use and patient compliance, particularly in breast cancer, and developing, testing, and implementing novel interventions that can address those factors. By identifying subsets of cancer patients, including patients who are Black, at highest risk for poor treatment quality, by examining determinants of suboptimal care, and by conducting interventional trials to improve compliance, reduce toxicity, and improve outcomes associated with therapy, Dr. Hershman's work has had a demonstrable and lasting impact on improving quality of life for people with cancer and reducing cost. She plans to leverage technology and implementation science to further optimize cancer patient outcomes through pain management and medication adherence interventions.

- **Jennifer Temel, M.D., Massachusetts General Hospital**: Dr. Temel's seminal contributions to supportive oncology focused on the early integration of palliative care into oncology care. Dr. Temel conducted a highly impactful clinical trial demonstrating that patients assigned to early integrated palliative care reported better quality of life, were more likely to have their resuscitation preferences documented in the health record, utilized fewer hospital resources than those receiving oncology care alone, and demonstrated longer survival times. As a result of her work, palliative care was changed on a national and international level. Dr. Temel's work has been incorporated into multiple national guidelines related to palliative care. Dr. Temel will use this award to advance her program of research through the development and evaluation of interventions using mobile applications (apps), video tools, and telehealth to deliver accessible and tailored supportive care.

The two renewed professors are:

- **Mary L. Disis, M.D., University of Washington in Seattle**: Dr. Disis is an expert in breast and ovarian cancer immunology and translational research. She is one of the pioneering investigators who discovered that HER-2/neu, the target of the drug Herceptin, is also tumor antigen. Her work has led to several clinical trials which evaluate boosting immunity to HER-2/neu with cancer vaccines. Her multifaceted research program includes the discovery of new antigens for common solid tumors, the development of vaccine and cellular therapy targeting specific antigens, and immunodiagnostics.
- **Nancy Krieger, Ph.D., Harvard University**: Dr. Krieger's work addresses conceptual frameworks to understand, analyze, and improve the people's health, including the ecosocial theory of disease distribution she first proposed in 1994 and its focus on embodiment and equity; etiologic research on societal determinants of population health and health inequities; and methodologic research on improving monitoring of health inequities.

“In the current challenging fundraising environment, it is gratifying to be able to make these awards to these highly esteemed investigators, who continue to break new ground, mentor future leaders, and lead the way in cancer research,” said William Phelps, Ph.D., senior vice president of Extramural Research. “We are very proud to be able to support the research of these highly innovative scientists working on behalf of cancer patients.”

The awards, normally announced in April, were delayed due to the closing of many academic institutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The American Cancer Society Extramural Research program currently supports research and training in a wide range of cancer-related disciplines at more than 200 institutions. With an investment of more than $4.9 billion since 1946, the ACS is the largest private, not-for-profit source of cancer research funds in the U.S., and has funded 49 researchers who have gone on to be awarded the Nobel Prize. The program primarily funds early career investigators, giving the best and the brightest a chance to explore cutting-edge ideas at a time when they might not find funding elsewhere.

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