

CERCIT: Research to Keep Texans Informed About Cancer Care

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The Texas Public Health Journal's winter 2013 issue, featured cancer prevention research findings from studies funded through the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). The voter-approved program has also invested taxpayer dollars in a cancer-specific comparative effectiveness research initiative called CERCIT (Comparative Effectiveness Research on Cancer in Texas). This multidisciplinary consortium of investigators at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDA), 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 is addressing important questions about cancer screening, the quality of cancer treatment, the quality of post-treatment surveillance and the quality of supportive care for cancer patients and survivors. Collaborating institution logos are displayed in figure 1.

The four CERCIT research projects are evaluating aspects of cancer related care by assessing overutilization, underutilization and appropriate utilization of care as recommended in established guidelines. Since the early nineties, researchers have used analytic methods that have been tested and documented to study these issues in elderly persons through the use of specialized population-based administrative datasets infused with Census Bureau data. Now, specifically in Texas, our investigators are able to examine changes over time from a variety of perspectives, including those of the patient, provider, neighborhood and medical system.

CERCIT research projects are supported through four project cores that: 1) obtain, manage and secure research data [Data Management Core]; 2) train junior level physicians to become the next generation of cancer outcomes and comparative effectiveness investigators in Texas [Training Core]; 3) disseminate the findings of our research

[Knowledge and Translation Core] and 4) provide guidance toward attaining our goal of creating a statewide resource for outcomes and comparative effectiveness research in cancer for Texas [Administrative Core].

Each of the project cores is described more completely in the following articles.

The CERCIT project is led by principal investigator Dr. James S. Goodwin from the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) and co-directed by Dr. Linda S. Elting from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (MDA). Other project and core lead investigators include Drs. Sharon H. Giordano (MDA), Taylor S. Riall (UTMB), Catherine D. Cooksley (UTMB), Jean Freeman (UTMB), Karl Eschbach (UTMB), Anthony DiNuzzo (UTMB) and Vivian Ho (Rice University). A complete list of CERCIT investigators may be found on the "About Us" page of our website at www.txcercit.org. The overall project framework is depicted in figure 2. The CERCIT investigators are grateful to the Editorial Board and Editorial Team of the Texas Public Health Journal for providing this opportunity to present highlights to date of our accomplishments. We believe our work to be essential in providing convincing evidence that can impact cancer related care decisions made by public health professionals, care providers, cancer patients and survivors and their families. We encourage the readers of this focused issue to learn more about our project and visit our website often for updates and new research findings.

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Figure 1. CERCIT Partner Institution logos

