

Your trusted partner in Geriatric Oncology

Increasing age is a major risk factor for developing cancer. Cancer treatment in the older population is complicated by factors related to other comorbidities, polypharmacy, functional and cognitive loss, and psychosocial support.

The Geriatric Oncology Program brings together expertise from across UNC to ensure the highest quality cancer care for older patients and to conduct research that furthers understanding of the factors affecting cancer treatment in the elderly. Older patients with cancer can be seen by both an expert in their type of cancer, as well as a geriatric oncologist, to maximize the quality of care for each individual. Program faculty members also educate medical students, residents, fellows, and faculty on issues related to geriatric oncology.

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UNC Cancer Care

Geriatric Oncology Specialty Clinic



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About the Clinic

The Geriatric Oncology clinic will initially be held on Mondays at the N.C. Cancer Hospital Outpatient Clinic. Whenever possible, we will accommodate requests for consultations at other times. We are accepting referrals for solid tumor and hematological malignancy patients aged 70 and over.

The goal of the Geriatric Oncology Clinic is to provide the referring clinician with information focused on personalizing treatment for older cancer patients who are candidates for chemotherapy, but for whom there are concerns about treatment tolerance and potential benefits.

All patients will receive a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment which is the cornerstone evaluation of older adults. The assessment aims to detect functional, cognitive and psychosocial impairments that can increase the risk of adverse outcomes during cancer treatment. It includes a detailed review of comorbidities and medications to evaluate potential adverse drug reactions and polypharmacy risk.



A broad range of expertise focused on the special needs of older patients

The geriatric oncology program draws on several outstanding resources from across the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus to meet the needs of older cancer patients including:

- The Institute on Aging, which works with NC government agencies to enhance the well-being of older North Carolinians by fostering statewide collaboration in research, education and service.
- The UNC Center for Aging and Health, which is a leading geriatric clinical, research, education, and training site.
- The Palliative Care Consult Service, a clinical program at UNC Hospitals, provides care and support for patients with life-limiting illnesses such as cancer.
- The Supportive Care Consultation Service and other clinic faculty and staff that focus on the management of pain and treatment side effects.

All of these groups are coming together with the goal of offering patients and families everything they may need to manage their cancer journey in the best possible way.

Leading-edge research and clinical trials

As members of the UNC School of Medicine, our physicians are also engaged in leading-edge research in areas ranging from quality of life and functional assessment, to predicting chemotherapy toxicity in older adults and determining the tolerability of combination therapies for older adults.

No matter what type of cancer is faced by older adults, our experts provide leadership to and participate in national clinical trials consortia, and offer multiple national and center-based clinical trials to patients that provide access to new treatments that are not yet widely available.

Support

UNC Lineberger and UNC Cancer Care are proud to provide a full range of support services for patients, caregivers and survivors. Our staff can assist patients and families needing assistance with local navigation and places to stay during treatment. The UNC Comprehensive Cancer Support Program (unccancercare.org/ccsp) offers services ranging from information and education to nutritional support, counseling, peer support groups, complementary and alternative therapies, and integrative medicine consultations.

Our Team

Director

Hyman B. Muss, MD, Hematology/Oncology

Geriatric Medicine

Jan Busby-Whitehead, MD, Chief
Director, Center for Aging and Health
Trevor Jolly, MD

Psychosocial Support

Donald Rosenstein, MD
Leeza Park, MD



L–R: Hyman B. Muss, MD, Program Director, Geriatric Oncology; Trevor Jolly, MD, Geriatric Medicine; Jan Busby-Whitehead, MD, Chief Director, UNC Center for Aging and Health

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unccancercare.org/geriatric