LUNG CANCER INITIATIVE
RESEARCH PROGRAM
2025 HIGHLIGHTS

$3.9 MILLION TOTAL RESEARCH FUNDING

74 RESEARCHERS FUNDED

Lung Cancer Initiative (LCI) is committed to advancing research that extends survival and brings hope to those affected by lung cancer. A key focus is supporting early-career researchers to encourage continued growth in the field. **LCI funds research through programs such as the LCI Fellows Program, Career Development Award, and the Vicky Amidon Innovation Award**, and also partners with organizations like LUNGevity, Lung Cancer Research Foundation, and the V Foundation to fund groundbreaking lung cancer research.

We are proud to introduce our *2025 Research Fellow Award* recipients and their projects below.

Laura Alder, Duke University School of Medicine, Durham, NC

Project Title: CNS PATTERN: CNS Progression After Targeted Therapy and Effect of Radiation in NSCLC

This study aims to better understand how the timing and use of radiation impact outcomes in NSCLC patients with brain metastases receiving targeted therapies. By analyzing real-world data across diverse genomic subtypes and care settings, the project will evaluate patterns of CNS progression, treatment sequences, and disparities in care. The findings will help define optimal, equitable treatment approaches in the era of brain-penetrant targeted therapies.

Darien Davda, Wake Forest University Health Sciences, Winston-Salem, NC

Project Title: Catching the Cache: Examining Lung Screening Eligibility and Cancer Risk Factors Amongst Incidentally Detected and Diagnosed Lung Cancers.

This study aims to assess how often patients with incidentally detected lung nodules would have qualified for screening under USPSTF guidelines, identifying potential missed cases. Researchers will compare lung cancer outcomes and social determinants of health across eligible and ineligible groups, and evaluate whether the PLCOm2012 risk calculator more effectively identifies high-risk individuals than current guidelines.

Abner Murray, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

Project Title: PREDICT-MPE: Profiling REsponses and Dysfunction in Immune Cells to Correlate with Therapy in Malignant Pleural Effusions

Malignant pleural effusion (MPE) is a common complication in advanced lung cancer, but its effects on the immune system are not well understood. This project examines how CD8 T cells function in pleural fluid, why they become ineffective, and whether their activity can be restored. By linking immune changes to treatment response and building a diverse patient registry, the study aims to identify biomarkers that guide more effective, equitable care for patients with MPE.

Jenny OBrien, Duke University School of Medicine, Durham, NC

Project Title: CAR-T Cells Targeting Citrullinated Vimentin in Cancer and Tumor-Promoting Cells in NSCLC

CAR-T cell therapy harnesses the immune system to fight cancer and has shown success in certain cancers, but not yet in lung cancer. We have identified a new target, called citrullinated vimentin, that we believe will allow CAR-T cell therapy to work in lung cancer without causing harm to normal organs in the body. We hope to prove this in pre-clinical studies and then develop a clinical trial to test their effectiveness in patients with lung cancer.

10 YEARS
LCI RESEARCH FELLOWS

Celebrating ten years of the LCI Research Fellow Program! *Click HERE for more info!*

Learn more about LCI's Lung Cancer Research Program!

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