

LUNG CANCER INITIATIVE
RESEARCH PROGRAM
2026 HIGHLIGHTS

\$4.4
MILLION TOTAL
RESEARCH FUNDING

84
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 Research 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.

Introducing Our 2026 Career Development and Innovation in Lung Cancer Research Award Recipients!



**Jeffrey Jensen, MD, PhD, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center
LCI Career Development Award Recipient, 2026**

Project Title: *Attacking Lung Cancer Non-Canonical PRAME Epitopes with Artificial Intelligence Generated Polypeptides*

In this study, Dr. Jensen uses artificial intelligence to design novel polypeptides that target specific lung cancer markers. His work represents a powerful intersection of cutting-edge technology and clinical application. A former LCI Research Fellow, Dr. Jensen continues to build on his early promise.



**Thomas Lycan, DO, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
Vicky Amidon Innovation in Lung Cancer Research Award, 2026**

Project Title: *IMPLEMENT-Lung: Mixed Methods Creation of a Patient Registry for Lung Cancer Biomarker Profiling*

A former LCI Career Development Award recipient, Dr. Lycan is focused on expanding access to precision medicine through the creation of a comprehensive lung cancer patient registry. This registry will help ensure that patients receive treatments tailored to the unique biology of their cancer.



**Trudy Oliver, PhD, Duke University School of Medicine / Duke Cancer Institute
Vicky Amidon Innovation in Lung Cancer Research Award, 2026**

Project Title: *Hillock-Like Cells as Drivers of Chemotherapy Resistance in Lung Squamous Cell Carcinoma*

Dr. Oliver's research investigates why some lung cancers stop responding to chemotherapy. Her work focuses on "hillock-like" cells and their role in tumor progression and treatment resistance—an area that could unlock new strategies to overcome one of the most challenging barriers in lung cancer care.

Learn more about
LCI's Lung Cancer
Research Program!



CLICK OR SCAN

SEE REVERSE FOR 2026 LCI
RESEARCH FELLOW AWARDS!



We are proud to introduce our 2026 LCI Research Fellowship Award Recipients!



Yijun Chen, PhD Candidate, Wake Forest University Health Sciences

Project Title: A Deep Learning Framework for Predicting Radiation-Induced Rib Fracture in NSCLC After SBRT Using Multimodal Longitudinal Data

Radiation therapy for lung cancer can damage nearby ribs, causing fractures in up to 40% of patients — yet doctors currently have limited tools to predict who is most at risk. This project uses artificial intelligence to analyze medical images and treatment data to identify high-risk patients before treatment, enabling more personalized care and better quality of life.



Eunbee Cho, MD, East Carolina University

Project Title: Assessing the Clinical Utility of Cytokine Profiling and Inflammatory Markers for Prediction and Monitoring of Immune Toxicity and Clinical Outcomes in Patients with Small Cell Lung Cancer Receiving Tarlatamab

Tarlatamab is a promising new immunotherapy for relapsed small cell lung cancer, but immune-related side effects can force early treatment discontinuation in some patients. This study will track cytokine levels—immune signaling proteins—to identify biomarkers that predict which patients are most at risk, with a particular focus on the medically underserved and racially diverse patient population of Eastern North Carolina.



Stephen Gottschalk, PhD, Medical University of South Carolina

Project Title: Synthetic Cis-Regulatory Elements for Transcriptionally Targeted Gene Therapy in Lung Adenocarcinoma

Every cancer cell carries molecular signatures that distinguish it from healthy cells—and this research aims to use those signatures against it. By mapping the unique protein activity of lung cancer cells and using AI to design precisely targeted DNA sequences, this project is laying the groundwork for a new generation of gene therapies that attack lung cancer while leaving normal cells unharmed.



Bryony Hawgood, PhD candidate, Duke University

Project Title: A Novel Therapeutic Target for Lung Mucinous Adenocarcinoma

Invasive mucinous adenocarcinoma is a form of lung cancer defined by excessive mucus production that fuels tumor growth and shields cancer cells from treatment—and it has no targeted therapies. This research focuses on a newly identified protein called GALE that is essential to mucus production in these tumors, with early results suggesting that blocking it — potentially using an already FDA-approved drug—could become the first therapy designed specifically for this disease.



Patrick Prochazka, PhD candidate, Duke University

Project Title: Evaluating the potential of repurposing targeted therapies for chemoprevention in lung cancer

Lung cancer is most often caught too late, but what if it could be stopped before it even starts? This project investigates whether two targeted drugs already available in the clinic can suppress the very first cancer-causing mutations that arise in lung tissue after tobacco exposure — a finding that could open the door to the first precision medicine approach to lung cancer prevention for high-risk individuals.