

The Cancer Institutes at Northwestern Medicine Head and Neck Cancer Institute





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Cancers of the head and neck are challenging and often daunting for the thousands of patients and families who face this diagnosis each year. Head and neck cancers include cancer of the tongue, the gums, and the lining of the cheek, as well as cancers of the jaw, throat, and nasal cavity. Patients affected with these life-altering and life-threatening conditions deserve world-class treatment options and immediate access to care.

Northwestern Medicine and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University are striving to provide answers and hope for those who are challenged with head and neck cancers. Incredibly, this includes 2,500 people in the Chicago area each year, and thousands more nationally.

Northwestern is bringing together the very best people, programs, and resources in the field in order to establish the **Head and Neck Cancer Institute**, an important new initiative within the Lurie Cancer Center. This multidisciplinary enterprise will provide exceptional care, cutting-edge treatments, and revolutionary research.

Why Northwestern?

Few organizations could pursue the vision that Northwestern has for this cancer institute. We have the breadth of functions necessary to address the many aspects of head and neck cancer care, training, and study. We also have access to extraordinary talent and resources, including:

- The uncommon excellence of the Lurie Cancer Center, a nationally and internationally recognized and National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center;
- Superb specialists and the superior track record of Northwestern's highly regarded Department of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery;
- Access to our distinguished and top-ranked hospital partners, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Prentice Women's Hospital, the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab;
- Cutting-edge research conducted by scientists in related departments on our Chicago campus, as well as the collaborations that take place with colleagues on Northwestern's Evanston campus;

- Outstanding faculty physicians who provide care in surgery, radiation, medical oncology, plastic surgery, dentistry, oral and maxillofacial surgery, speech and swallowing pathology, neuroradiology, pathology, and nuclear medicine; and
- Innovative education and training provided by Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Together, these points of pride and distinction will provide the new Head and Neck Cancer Institute with an unparalleled array of resources. They position Northwestern to build a center of medical specialization like no other, capable of confronting cancers of the head and neck and best serving patients and families who face these challenging conditions.

A Life-Altering Strategy

The Head and Neck Cancer Institute is coalescing around two vital goals – Excellence in Clinical Care and Advanced Research in Head and Neck Cancer. Sandeep Samant, MD, chief of the Division of Head and Neck Surgery, professor of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, and director of the Head and Neck Cancer Institute, is passionate about the Institute and its vision.



“There is an enormous need for a multidisciplinary head and neck center to serve those in Chicagoland and beyond who face the rigors of this terrible disease. Together with Northwestern Medicine and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, we are providing an answer to the prayers of many people by creating the Head and Neck Cancer Institute.”

Sandeep Samant, MD, Director of the Head and Neck Cancer Institute, Chief of Head and Neck Surgery, Northwestern Medicine, and Professor of Otolaryngology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

“These two major directions will allow us to devote our energy and resources to serving our patients with peerless care, while relentlessly researching the causes of and effective treatments for the disease,” says Dr. Samant.

Advanced Research in Head and Neck Cancer will embody three primary areas of focus that, together, will generate indispensable knowledge and new directions in the battle against head and neck cancer.

Head and Neck Cancer Biology—How is a head and neck cancer cell different from normal cells? What are the genetic changes and protein alterations that underlie the development of cancer? How does the microenvironment surrounding cancer cells influence their growth and spread? Our clinicians are conducting a number of studies in collaboration with scientists from various disciplines at Lurie Cancer Center to get a better understanding of these questions. Accomplished scientists in cancer biology with expertise in genomics, proteomics, cell signaling pathways, and tumor immunology need to be recruited to significantly expand upon these research efforts. Specific areas of focus for the Head and Neck Institute will be to study the biologic basis of cancer formation in individuals previously exposed to human papilloma virus, those exposed to tobacco, and, in particular, patients of younger age who develop oral cancer without any known predisposing factors.

Aside from recruitment of researchers to the Head and Neck Cancer Institute, we wish to provide pilot grants for scientific experiments, design, and conduct of clinical trials of innovative treatment approaches, and study of long-term effects of cancer and its treatment on a patient’s quality of life. These investigations are expected to serve as nidus for future extramural funding that will create a truly vibrant center of excellence in the fight against head and neck cancer.

Clinical Database—This endeavor will collect vital information and details from patients about their cancer. The clinically relevant data elements will be amassed in a sophisticated repository that can be accessed as an integral part of the research to develop patient-centered precision therapies in the future.

Tumor Bank—Patients who wish to contribute to a repository of tissues will assist Northwestern in building a bank of invaluable knowledge. This will provide a base to study and research new ways to treat head and neck cancers.

Excellence in Clinical Care will incorporate a number of components that strengthen and enhance the result and experience for each patient:

Exceptional Treatment—Comprehensive care will be provided by highly specialized experts in the field. Already, novel treatment strategies are being developed that maximize advancements in all of the specialties that must collaborate in the coordinated evaluation and



management of each patient. These include robotic surgery, endoscopic surgery with computer-assisted navigation, microvascular reconstructive surgery, and advanced maxillofacial prosthodontics. Precise radiation allows for an enhanced ability to cure cancer with fewer side effects. Breakthrough approaches have improved the ability to specifically target many head and neck cancers.

Cancer Navigation Program—Patients will receive extensive support that addresses the entire spectrum of their needs throughout their care—from the start of their experience to the time they complete it. This includes providing patients and appropriate family with a thorough understanding of their particular circumstances, coordinating schedules for seeing different physicians and staff, as well as addressing the need to cope with the disease and its challenges. Through patient-centered care, we seek to optimize the multidisciplinary process that patients with head and neck cancer will experience at Northwestern.

Survivorship Program—This “after-care program” will manage, research, and address needs related to the day-to-day difficulties patients experience after they leave the hospital. Northwestern’s objective is not just for patients to survive. The ultimate goal is to get patients back to enjoying life—at home, at work, and with family and friends. In addition to counseling and education, the Survivorship Program will include a support group where head and neck cancer survivors can meet and provide understanding and inspiration for each other.

Educational Programs—Educational activities for patients are embedded throughout the above-described programs. In addition, new patient materials and resources must be developed to reinforce and enhance vital communication. It is equally important, however, to constantly educate physicians and staff who are a part of this multidisciplinary endeavor. For that reason, the Harold J. Pelzer, MD, DDS, Endowed Lectureship for Compassionate Clinical Care will be delivered to staff. In addition, the Northwestern Head and Neck Cancer Symposium is planned as a national conference for doctors in the field.



Leadership—Dr. Harold Pelzer retired as the distinguished and longtime chief of the Division of Head and Neck Surgery after an astounding 42-year association with Northwestern. The University leadership seeks to recognize Dr. Pelzer in perpetuity and build on his legacy. Northwestern has authorized an initiative to raise the necessary funds to create the Harold J. Pelzer, MD, DDS, Endowed Professorship in Head and Neck Surgery. Upon achieving the \$3 million goal, this professorship will be used to strengthen the leadership of the Head and Neck Cancer Institute.

The Head and Neck Cancer Institute at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University is urgently needed in Chicago and the Midwest. Its presence will serve as a quaternary care destination for the highly specialized treatments required for cancers of the head and neck. First and foremost, the Head and Neck Cancer Institute will save lives. It will profoundly improve and elevate the treatment received by thousands of patients.

The Impactful Role of Philanthropic Partners

The Head and Neck Cancer Institute is a tremendous undertaking. Both Northwestern Medicine and the Lurie Cancer Center have made it an important strategic priority.

Only so much, however, can be accomplished alone by these institutions in view of their extensive responsibilities to advance many other medical priorities.

As has been the case throughout **We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern Medicine**, philanthropic partners have been the sustaining force that allows great ideas to fully become purposeful realities. Generous advocates are stepping forward with gifts to fund and name priority needs. As a result, important initiatives are being advanced that otherwise might not flourish.

The Head and Neck Cancer Institute seeks philanthropic support from friends and colleagues who believe in its noble mission and who wish to accelerate its impact. Incredible work already is taking place at the Head and Neck Cancer Institute; however, the partnership of generous donors will be a catalyst for more success. Your interest, your friendship, your confidence in us, and certainly your financial support are encouraged and welcomed. By investing in our vision and daily efforts, you will do more than provide inspiration and assistance. It assuredly will make you an integral part of every life that is saved by the Institute's gifted surgeons, as well as every life that is enriched by its devoted staff and the research advances that are improving care today and in the future.



For more information about supporting the Head and Neck Cancer Institute, please contact:

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