

6th Annual Henry Ford + MSU Cancer Research Symposium

Programmatic Pathways in Cancer Research

October 29-30, 2026

The Henry Autograph Collection | 300 Town Center Drive, Dearborn, MI

Thursday, October 29, 2026

Presidential Ballroom

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Cancer Center Research Program Meetings (by invite only) • Physical Sciences in Cancer (Plaza A) <i>Eric Mellon, MD, PhD, Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology</i> • Cancer Biology and Immunology (Plaza B) <i>Sophia Lunt, PhD, Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Howard Crawford, PhD, Senior Scientist, Department of Surgery</i> • Cancer Epidemiology, Prevention and Control (Presidential Ballroom) <i>Kelly Hirko, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics</i> <i>Christine Neslund-Dudas, PhD, Associate Scientist, Department of Public Health Sciences</i>
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.	REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN (Lobby)
4:00 – 5:30 p.m.	Session I: Emerging Researchers at Henry Ford + MSU <i>Session Co-Chairs: Shyam Nyati, PhD and Kathy Gallo, PhD</i> • HPV16 Productivity vs Tumorigenicity in the Oropharynx <i>Robert Jackson, PhD, Assistant Scientist, Department of Otolaryngology</i> • Clonal Hematopoiesis as a Driver of Myeloid and Solid Cancers <i>Tyler Parsons, PhD, Assistant Scientist, Hematology and Oncology Division, Department of Medicine</i> • Increasing Cancer Prevention and Detection Behaviors through Multilevel, Interdisciplinary Approaches <i>Olivia Aspiras, PhD, Assistant Scientist, Department of Public Health Sciences</i> • Intersecting Inequities: Cancer Among People with HIV <i>Jennifer McGee-Avila, PhD, Assistant Scientist, Department of Public Health Sciences</i> • Decoding Allele-Specific RAS Signaling to Reveal Cancer Vulnerabilities <i>Jonathan Diedrich, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology</i> • Dendritic Cell Reprogramming During Tumor Progression <i>Michael Plebanek, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine</i>
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.	NETWORKING & REFRESHMENTS
6:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Q&A Session: Henry Ford + MSU Cancer Center Leaders

Friday, October 30, 2026

Presidential Ballroom

7:00 – 8:00 a.m.	REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN (Lobby) BREAKFAST (Presidential Ballroom)
8:00 – 8:15 a.m.	Opening Remarks David Lanfear, MD <i>Chief Scientific Officer and System Vice President of Research, Henry Ford Health</i>
8:15 – 9:30 a.m.	Session II: Cancer Therapeutics: From Discovery to Clinical Impact <i>Session Co-Chairs: Anna Moore, PhD, Lisa Rogers, DO, Clara Hwang, MD</i> Includes a panel discussion featuring all speakers (15 minutes). From Discovery to Impact: HF+MSU Reimagining Academic Drug Discovery <i>Andrea Gonzales, PhD, Professor and Director, Drug Discovery, Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology</i> Development of RNA-Based Therapeutics for PDAC <i>Lorenzo Sempere, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Radiology</i> Targeting Pro-oncogenic Signaling Downstream of Warburg Effect to selectively induce Ferroptosis in Cancer <i>Charles Hong, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Medicine</i> Drug Development: From First-in-Human to FDA Approval <i>Fawzi F Abu Rous, MD, Assistant Professor, Hematology and Oncology Division, Department of Medicine</i> From Bench to Bedside: Gene Therapy Translation through Investigator- Initiated Trials at Henry Ford Health <i>Shyam Nyati, PhD, Associate Scientist, Department of Radiation Oncology</i>
9:30 – 9:45 a.m.	BREAK
9:45 – 10:30 a.m.	Session III: Head and Neck Cancer <i>Session Co-Chairs: Steven Chang, MD and Samantha Tam, MD</i> Keynote: HPV-mediated Head and Neck Cancers and Immunotherapy Sara Pai, MD, PhD <i>Professor, Department of Head and Neck Surgery, Yale School of Medicine</i>

3:35 – 4:35 p.m. Session V: Best Abstract Awardees Oral Presentations

Session Co-Chairs: Ben Rybicki, PhD and Jamie Bernard, PhD

- **Automated cGMP Production of [18F]FHBG for PET Imaging of Oncolytic Viral Gene Therapy in Glioblastoma Patients**
Chris Hoang, Graduate Student, Department of Chemistry
- **Aging-Induced DGAT1 Metabolic Reprogramming Drives Resistance to PD-1 Blockade in Ovarian Cancer**
Mary Priyanka Udumula, PhD, Research Scientist, Department of Gynecologic Oncology
- **Disability Burden and Mammography Screening Among U.S. Women Aged 40–74: A Population-Based Analysis of 2024 BRFSS Data**
Rebecca Miller, Medical Student, College of Human Medicine
- **GABA signaling in CAFs as a novel regulator of pancreatic cancer immunosuppression**
Ariana Musa de Aquino, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Surgery

4:35 – 4:50 p.m. CLOSING REMARKS & RAFFLE