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For immediate release:

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Fox Chase Cancer Center Risk Assessment Program Celebrates 20 Years of Patient Empowerment through Research and Education

Philadelphia —Every time a patient knows that he or she carries a gene mutation and takes informed action to prevent cancer based on that knowledge, they have been empowered. This month, Fox Chase Cancer Center celebrates this advance through the 20th anniversary of its “Risk Assessment Program.”

Founded in 1991 by Mary Daly, MD, PhD, chair of the Department of Clinical Genetics at Fox Chase, the Risk Assessment Program was established to explore the interaction of genetic and environmental factors in cancer risk and to develop preventative approaches.

One of the first in the nation, the program formerly known as the Margaret Dyson Family Risk Assessment Program was founded to study families with a history of breast and ovarian cancers, and has expanded to include research and counseling for families with prostate, gastrointestinal and lung cancers, as well as melanoma.

Over the past 20 years, Fox Chase's Risk Assessment Program has helped more than 13,000 individuals map their family history of cancer and understand their genetic risk. Researchers have examined genes from nearly 2,000 families, and each year the program's staff provides some 2,000 hours of counseling to participants.

Once counselors discover an individual's genetic status, they provide suggestions for screening based on that status. This proactive approach helps individuals catch cancer in its earliest and most treatable stages.

Risk Assessment Program members are also able to take part in research studies and receive ongoing education about their risk.

“We are extremely proud of how far we’ve come in the past 20 years,” says Dr. Daly. “We have seen a number of milestones during this period, from the discovery of the BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 genes to new screening methods such as breast MRI. As genetic mapping advances, we expect to build upon our current knowledge and offer patients an even greater understanding of their risk and increased prevention and treatment options.”

The Risk Assessment Program is one of several innovative programs in the movement toward personalized medicine at Fox Chase. In February 2008, the center launched the Keystone Programs for Collaborative Discovery, a suite of innovative team-based cancer research initiatives seeking to accelerate the pace of medical progress against cancer.

In May 2009, Fox Chase also launched the Institute for Personalized Medicine to match emerging targeted drug therapies to the unique genetic profiles of individual patient tumors on a much larger scale than previously possible.

And in 2012, Fox Chase expects to open its Cancer Genome Institute, providing genomic sequencing technology to analyze each patient’s tumor genome. The results can then provide oncologists with information that can be used to guide treatment or steer the patient to appropriate drug trials.

“The scientific community has only begun to understand the genetic and familial contributions to cancer risk. Initiatives such as the Risk Assessment Program allow scientists to continue working toward a better way to detect and prevent the disease, based on specific genetic markers,” says Michael V. Seiden, MD, PhD, president and CEO of Fox Chase Cancer Center. “Equally as important, the program enables families to take an active role in understanding and sharing knowledge with each other.”

Phillip Mucksavage, MD, Joins Temple as Director of Urology Robotics and Assistant Professor of Urology

Phillip Mucksavage, MD, has joined Temple University Hospital as director of the Urology Robotics Program and has been appointed assistant professor of Urology at Temple University School of Medicine. His specialty is minimally invasive, robotic urology procedures including kidney and bladder removal and radical prostatectomies.

“Dr. Mucksavage’s training in robotics will be an invaluable asset to our patients, medical school students and staff,” said Jack Mydlo, MD, professor and chair of urology, in announcing his appointment. “His capabilities will allow him to take full advantage of the robot, offering our patients the latest in minimally invasive robotic-assisted care.”

Dr. Mucksavage is board-certified in urology. He graduated from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in 2004. He then completed a urology residency at the Hospital of the University of

Pennsylvania, followed by a fellowship in Endourology and Minimally Invasive Urology at the University of California Irvine in Orange County, CA.

During his career, Dr. Mucksavage has published numerous articles, abstracts and book chapters and presented at several national conferences.

He is a member of the American Urological Association, the Endourology Society, the American College of Surgeons and the Philadelphia Urological Society.

New Procedure Allows Jefferson Physicians to Spot Dangerous Tumors Earlier

Thomas Jefferson University Hospital has a new tool to help diagnose an aggressive form of bladder cancer. More than 60,000 Americans are diagnosed with bladder cancer each year. Often, it's easy to spot the tumors, but some tumors grow flat against the bladder wall and can go undetected.

"Many times, these are not obvious to the naked eye and this is really where the cystview really shines by allowing us to see these flat cancers you may not be able to see on a visual inspection of the bladder," says Leonard Gomella, MD, chairman of Urology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Dr. Gomella says with this procedure, called Blue Light Cystoscopy, a chemical dye, which lights up the tumors, is injected into the bladder, and then doctors take a look.

"It helps us to improve our visualization of tumors and the more effectively we can see where the tumors are in the bladder, the more effective our treatment can be in eradicating those tumors."

Dr. Gomella says Jefferson is the only institution in the mid-Atlantic region using Blue Light Cystoscopy.

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