

Skin Cancer Institute

Annual Report 2010

RESEARCH • OUTREACH • PATIENT CARE • EDUCATION

## Letter from the co-directors

### The Skin Cancer Institute has reached its fifth year!

The Arizona Cancer Center started the Skin Cancer Institute (SCI) in 2005 to make sure that people diagnosed with skin cancer in Arizona could find the best care possible. We have made extraordinary progress towards this goal, and the SCI has become an international model of multidisciplinary research, outreach, education and clinical care. In this report, we highlight our 2010 accomplishments and tell you what we can achieve going forward.

In 2010, we shaped a comprehensive vision of who we are and whom we serve. You will see in this report our progress towards successfully treating patients with skin cancers, identifying better methods for detecting skin cancer, targeting core sun safety and skin cancer prevention messages and working with community partners. We remain committed to our mission to prevent and cure skin cancer.

We have had several insights in the past year. One is that most people do not know that skin cancer is a real problem. Most Arizonans do not recognize that skin cancer claims lives and that we are in the midst of a skin cancer crisis. We know different. Skin cancer is a problem that greatly impacts our community and our state and the number of Americans diagnosed with skin cancer of all types is expected to increase rapidly with our aging population. We also know that skin cancer is preventable and very treatable, if caught early. We are working to get these messages out. You can help us spread the word.

Another insight is that many in Tucson and other Arizona communities are unaware that the SCI is funded only by donations and grants. We have been fortunate to receive funding from the **Bert W. Martin Foundation** for the past five years along with other generous donors who have joined the SCI

### Our mission: to prevent and cure skin cancer

The Skin Cancer Institute unifies the Arizona Cancer Center's many skin cancer-related activities into one coordinated entity. We seek to bring innovative research, visionary clinical care, life-changing education and community outreach together under one virtual roof. The vision for the SCI is to serve as the model for community-based skin cancer research and care.

- Increase public awareness of sun-safe behavior and skin cancer detection through community outreach
- Provide enhanced education and training for skin cancer patients, high-risk individuals, students and providers
- Improve access and referral to consolidated and enhanced dermatology clinic resources for specialized patient care
- Increase knowledge of the origins, prevention and treatment of skin cancer through research

**The Skin Cancer Institute is now an international model of comprehensive research, outreach, education and clinical care.**

**We remain committed to our mission to prevent and cure skin cancer.**

**Most people do not know that skin cancer is a real problem. We know different. You can help us spread the word.**

family. These funds allow us to expand our reach in the state, move forward with amazing research and strengthen the comprehensive skin cancer care we provide in our Arizona Cancer Center clinics.

As our organization grows, we need people like you to carry our message, support cutting-edge skin cancer research and sustain the sun safety education we provide. We are deeply appreciative to all who enable our success. Your support makes future achievements possible.

In the following pages, you will see highlights from the SCI in 2010. We would love to talk to you about the work we do and what you can do to help.



**Robin B. Harris, PhD, MPH**  
Co-Director, Skin Cancer Institute



**David S. Alberts, MD**  
Co-Director, Skin Cancer Institute  
Director, The Arizona Cancer Center

**Many in Tucson and other Arizona communities are unaware that the SCI is funded only by donations and grants.**

**Your support makes future achievements possible.**

**Q: Why do some people get skin cancer and others don't?  
What can we do to detect skin cancer at its earliest stages?  
How can we treat skin cancer more effectively?**

**A: We're working to find out.**

**Skin Cancer Institute researchers are working to:**

- Design clinical trials that can reach patients with effective treatments faster
- Understand why some patients survive melanoma while others suffer life-threatening metastasis
- Detect changes in skin at the level of the hair follicle to aid early detection of skin cancers
- Explore how skin reacts to ultraviolet exposure and how skin cancer grows
- Unlock the genetic codes that lead to skin cancer
- Discover the very best ways to educate the community about skin cancer prevention
- Describe the complex relationship between sun exposure and vitamin D

## Researchers at the Skin Cancer Institute strive to provide answers to fundamental skin cancer questions

Members of the Skin Cancer Institute include a wide variety of health professionals, scientists and community members. Our researchers cross multiple disciplines including dermatology, optical sciences, nursing, genetic science, public health and oncology, and we even collaborate with scientists around the world to develop groundbreaking research projects.

In 2010, SCI forged a relationship with the Queensland Institute of Medical Research in Australia to form the **Pan-Pacific Skin Cancer Consortium**, which held its first meeting in Tucson in October. This new and exciting research endeavor unites scientists from Brisbane and Tucson who have formed five creative working groups. **These teams have identified numerous innovative projects to pursue that could change what we know about skin cancer forever.**

Grants from the **National Institutes of Health** and a generous donation by **Atlantic Philanthropies** made the Australian partnership possible. Their support not only funds the Consortium's cutting-edge skin cancer research, but **multiplies all of our ongoing efforts in the prevention, detection and treatment of skin cancer.**

The **Skin Cancer Research Seed Grants Program** made additional research possible in 2010. Created from donations to the SCI's 2009 Walkathon for Melanoma Awareness, the grants program supports researchers testing novel strategies that can be translated to reach patients and the community. Four one-year grants were awarded to University of Arizona researchers. The awardees are:

- **Jeff Stone, PhD**
- **Yira Bermudez, PhD**
- **Sally Dickinson, PhD**
- **Robert Krouse, MD**

The University of Arizona Foundation and the Office of the Vice President for Research recognized the groundbreaking research of **Lee Cranmer, MD, PhD**, with a **Faculty Seed Grant** to study ways melanoma spreads in the body. Dr. Cranmer, a medical oncologist at the Arizona Cancer Center at UMC North and UA associate professor of medicine, and **Sherif Morgan, PhD**, a postdoctoral research associate, will isolate cells from 200 melanoma tissue samples that represent melanoma at different disease stages. These cells will be studied to identify the molecular changes that occur when melanoma grows and spreads. Ultimately, this information will help in the discovery of effective treatments for metastatic melanoma.



1. The first meeting of the Pan-Pacific Skin Cancer Consortium.  
2. Lee Cranmer, MD, PhD  
3. Sherif Morgan, PhD

**This information will help in the discovery of effective treatments for metastatic melanoma.**



OUTREACH

**Our messages are clear.**

**We want the community to recognize that skin cancer is a real problem and is preventable through simple changes.**

**We want to share that skin cancer is highly treatable, if it is caught early, and reinforce the importance of self-skin exam and visits with a dermatologist.**

**With your help, we can extend the reach of our messages and help more people stay safe in the sun.**

**At the Skin Cancer Institute we want to reach:**

- Parents who want to protect their children
- Our youngest community members who can learn how to be safe in the sun
- Educators who shape young minds and are role models for the next generation
- Young adults who think that tan skin is in
- Older adults that have had a lifetime of sun exposure
- Outdoor workers who have no other choice but to labor in the sun

Increasing community awareness of sun safety and skin cancer detection



1



3



2

1. A booth at La Encantada, an open air mall in Tucson, is an ideal outdoor venue to reach the community. 2. SCI reaches communities statewide. 3. Young children in sun-safe gear at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum learn about how desert animals and humans stay safe in the sun.

**Progress through partnerships**

**The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is one of the Skin Cancer Institute's prized partners. 2010 marked the fifth year that we co-hosted **Living in Harmony with the Sun**. Over the years, we've screened nearly 700 people for signs of skin cancer at no cost and reached thousands through educational sun safety exhibits.

**Sanofi-Aventis**

The SCI has continued a valued relationship with Sanofi-Aventis, a leading global pharmaceutical company. SCI has provided skin cancer screening and health education to more than 300 employees at the company's Tucson research center.

**And more**

The SCI reaches Arizonans via community events such as health fairs and cancer-related walks and runs, as well as through events for Arizona educators, 4-H agents and potential donors. In 2010, SCI provided education at more than 40 events, reaching thousands in the community.

**We aim to prevent skin cancer by reaching our youngest community members**

We know that skin cancer is preventable and that skin cancer prevention must start early. Parents have the power to protect their young children from the dangers of the sun and act as sun safety role models.

The **Hats On** program was developed in 2009 to educate parents about sun safety and ways they can protect young children. **Our goal is to put a hat on every Tucson baby.**

Hats On was made possible by one donor who wanted to honor his friend lost to melanoma. From this original donation, Hats On expanded in 2010 with additional gifts from two local organizations, Allegra Print & Imaging on 22nd via the **FootPRINT Fund** for printing support and **Strongpoint Public Relations** for strategic planning consultation.

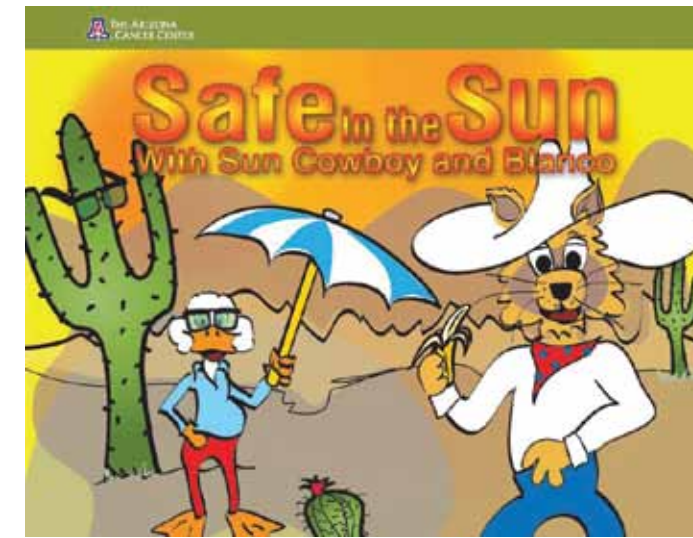
The Skin Cancer Institute continues to partner with **University Medical Center** and **Diamond Children's** to distribute sun safe baby hat gift bags at multiple clinical sites, as well as large community events, such as the Annual MIX-FM Baby Fair at the Tucson Convention Center. Together, we reached thousands of parents emphasizing sun safe clothing choices for children.

In 2011, SCI will launch a community-wide sun safety educational campaign targeting families and Tucson babies.



“ Many thanks for the helpful pamphlet and for the wide brim hat. I’ve bought several hats for my daughter but have not been able to find one with a wide brim till now! Thank you.”

- a grateful parent



**Sun Cowboy and Blanco make a great impression on kids and the community**

The Skin Cancer Institute was awarded a HEMMY (Health Education Media Makers Yearly) Award from the Arizona Public Health Association for our newest Pre-K health education activity book, **“Safe in the Sun with Sun Cowboy and Blanco.”** The annual award recognizes excellence in health education materials and campaigns.

This activity book features two “mascots” and includes rhymes to convey sun safety tips to young children. These books are distributed at community events and are provided in classrooms as part of the **Healthy Children Arizona** program, which teaches young children that a healthy lifestyle includes good nutrition, physical activity and sun safety. The Healthy Children Arizona program reached nearly 8,000 children in 2010. A similar program, the **Sun Safety Puppet Show**, which uses hand-puppets of Sun Cowboy and Blanco to teach children about sun safety, reached more than 2,500 children and their parents and teachers.



**We are making it cool to lose the tan**

**Project SASS** (Students are Sun Safe) is a fun, interactive program that trains University of Arizona students to teach local teenagers about skin cancer and sun protection.

Skin Cancer Institute staff created four interactive, multimedia training-modules and the engaging, educational presentation used in high school classrooms.

In 2010, nearly 250 Tucson-area high school students learned about the sun’s powerful rays and the skin damage they cause. Students also explored why activities like “laying out” and using tanning beds are unsafe, and discussed ways that they can prevent skin cancer.

This program, which will continue in 2011, was made possible by a **Community Connections Grant** from the UA Foundation and the Office of the Vice President for Research.



SUN SAFE



NOT SUN SAFE



SUN SAFE



NOT SUN SAFE

Improving access to integrated patient care

**Our comprehensive, multidisciplinary skin cancer team includes:**

- Dermatologists
- Pathologists
- Radiologists
- Surgical oncologists
- Medical oncologists
- Radiation oncologists
- Hematologists
- Health educators
- Behavioral scientists
- Clinical research specialists

PATIENT CARE

“ I live in Las Cruces, New Mexico, but decided to treat my melanoma at the Arizona Cancer Center. What an excellent choice. ”

Don Panagrossi, melanoma survivor

**Our comprehensive patient care team is even more complete**

Five years ago, the Skin Cancer Institute sought to guarantee that people diagnosed with skin cancer in Arizona could find comprehensive and compassionate clinical care. We are achieving this goal each day.

The Arizona Cancer Center at UMC North has become the place to visit for skin cancer detection and treatment. Our clinical experts use a team approach to patient assessment, treatment and management, all occurring in a state-of-the-art facility. Team members work closely with referring physicians to create a plan of care and follow-up for individual patients.

The SCI's innovative **Cutaneous Oncology Program** and **Pigmented Lesion Clinic** are setting the bar for skin cancer diagnosis and treatment. The number of

patients at the clinics increases each year, numbering nearly 7,000 in 2010. **Our specialists currently see more than half of all cases of invasive melanoma requiring multidisciplinary care in the state.**



In 2010, **Jeanette Pitts, MD**, a Mohs and dermatologic surgeon joined the SCI, bringing additional knowledge and experience to the team. With the addition of Dr. Pitts, a University of Arizona associate professor of clinical medicine, our team has become even more complete to provide our patients with even better care.

The Skin Cancer Multidisciplinary Clinic Team (from left): Clara Curiel, MD; Keliagh Culpepper, MD; Baldassarre Stea, MD, PhD; Fangru Lian, MD; Evan Hersh, MD; Joanne Jeter, MD; Lee Cranmer, MD, PhD; Lois Loescher, PhD, RN; Jill Cohen, MD; Agnes Sharifi, FNP-C





EDUCATION



### Residency program off to a great start

The Skin Cancer Institute is educating the next generation of dermatologists. The Dermatology Resident Education Program, reestablished in 2010, welcomes **Jason DuPont, MD**, and **Sandra Leyo DuPont, MD**.

The Division of Dermatology at the University of Arizona College of Medicine received full national accreditation for a residency program in dermatology. The new residents were selected from more than 200 applicants and began their three-year training in November 2010. They will see patients at the Arizona Cancer Center at UMC North, the Southern Arizona Veteran's Administration Health Care System and several community practices.

**James E. Sligh, MD, PhD**, associate director of the Skin Cancer Institute and dermatology division chief, deserves special recognition for championing the rebuilding of the residency program and serving as its director.



### Helping high-risk patients protect their skin

**Lois Loescher, PhD, RN**, a University of Arizona associate professor of nursing and the Skin Cancer Institute's director of education and behavior research, is making sure high-risk patients receive the information they need

to detect and prevent skin cancer. She is targeting skin cancer education to organ transplant recipients.

Numbering more than 230,000 in the United States, organ transplant recipients are 250 times more likely to develop skin cancer than the general public. Dr. Loescher created a brief educational video to inform these patients of their elevated risk and help them understand ways that they can protect themselves from developing skin cancer.



### Unique patient education

The Skin Cancer Institute offers patients one-on-one, personalized health education. This valuable health education service is a unique feature of the skin cancer clinics of the Arizona Cancer Center. This no-cost program allows our health care providers time to focus on patient

concerns. It also allows **Lisa Quale**, the Skin Cancer Institute's patient educator, the opportunity to empower patients with the information they need to detect skin cancer at its earliest stage and prevent future skin cancer. Patients have been very satisfied with the information they have received and the SCI is proud to provide such an innovative, caring service. In just five years, more than 1,000 patients have received personalized education.



### Keeping physicians up-to-date

The Skin Cancer Institute is committed to facilitating the continuing education of dermatologists and associated healthcare providers.

In October 2010, the SCI held the Current Trends in the Genetics of Melanoma and Clinical Implications conference in partnership with the Tucson Dermatology Society (TDS).

TDS recently joined with its sister organization in the Greater Phoenix Area and formed the Arizona Dermatology Society. To mark this new union, more than 80 physicians, scientists, other health providers and representatives from the American Academy of Dermatology attended the all-day conference focused on how recent findings in the genetics of melanoma impact patient care.

Members at the Skin Cancer Institute at the Arizona Cancer Center remain committed to ensuring that every Arizonan diagnosed with skin cancer receives comprehensive clinical care.

We will keep working hard to make sure that the next generation of Arizonans never have to seek skin cancer care.

## You can help us prevent and cure skin cancer.

You can help us make a difference in 2011.

You can fund amazing research.

You can volunteer.

You can share your story.

You can help us educate the community.



In 2011, we will:

- Embark on innovative research projects
- Present targeted community-wide educational campaigns
- Find ways to serve our patients even better

Let's discuss how you can get involved.

**Call**

(520) 626-1074 to speak with staff that care about what you have to say

**E-mail**

hhiscox@azcc.arizona.edu to begin the conversation

**Visit**

www.AzSkinCancerInstitute.org to learn more about the work we do



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## Skin Cancer Institute

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