

# NCI Clinician Scientist Awards



James H. Doroshow, M.D.  
November 10, 2021

# Topics for this Session

- Presentations
  - Early-stage Surgeon Scientist Program (*Zahir*)
  - R50 Clinician Scientist Research Award (*Doroshov*)
- Discussion (*all*)
  - Reimagining NCI's Cancer Clinical Investigator Team Leadership Award (CCITLA)

# Notice of Special Interest: Administrative Supplements to Participate in the NCI Early-Stage Surgeon Scientist Program (ESSP) [NOT-CA-21-100](#)



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*CTAC Meeting | November 10, 2021*

# Early-Stage Surgeon Scientist Program (ESSP): Purpose and Background

## Purpose

- Support and train early-stage surgeon scientists conducting cancer-related research
- Accelerate to an independent surgeon scientist career

## Background

- Physician scientists decreased from 4.7% of the workforce to 1.5% since the 1980s
- Reasons cited: economic pressures for clinical productivity, administrative responsibilities, and difficulty obtaining extramural funding

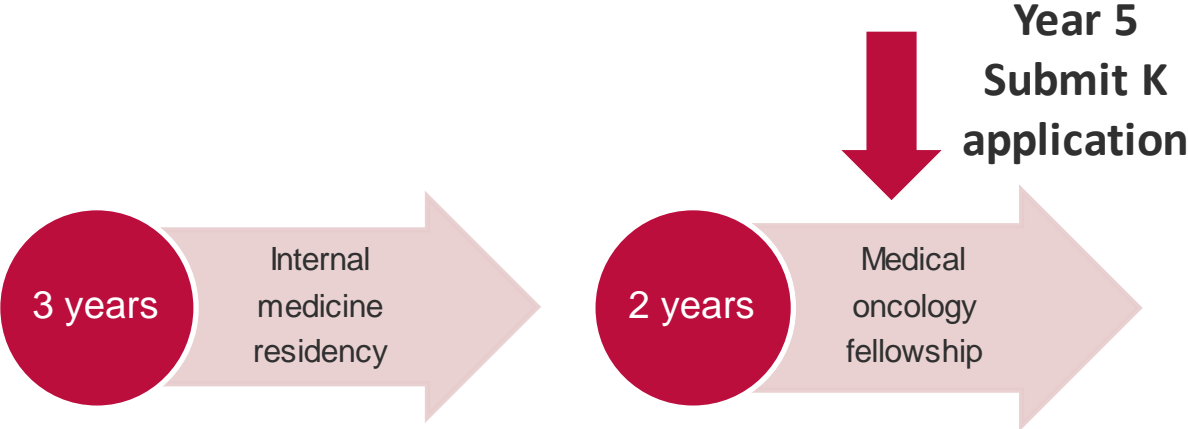
# Challenges Surgeon Scientists Face

- Administrative responsibilities
- Difficulty obtaining grant funding
- Clinical productivity pressures
- ***Hospitals & procedure-based revenue***
- ***Surgical training paradigm***

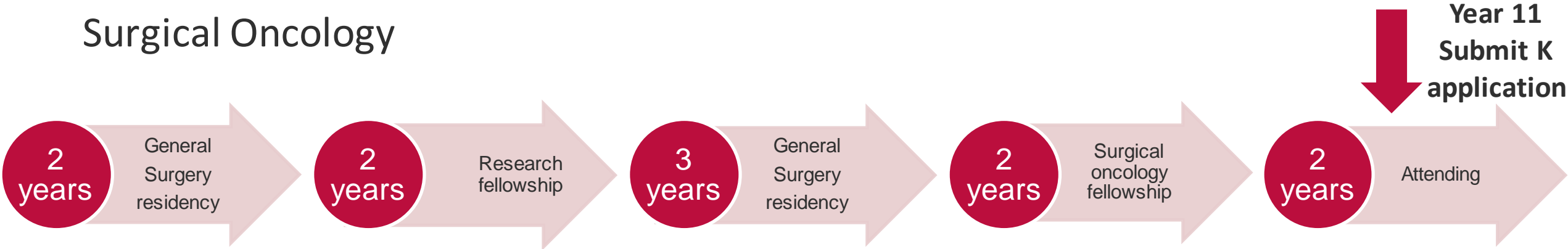
Keswani, S *et al*; *Ann Surg*. 2017  
Jain, MK *et al*; *NEJM*. 2019

# Training Paradigms

## Medical Oncology



## Surgical Oncology



# ESSP Program Highlights

- Participants from across the United States trained in cohorts in cancer-related research
- Participants supported through administrative supplement to NCI-designated Cancer Center Support Grant (P30) or Comprehensive Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (CPACHE; U54); also open to intramural NCI surgeon scientists
- Mentoring committee established for each participant, consisting of content experts from academic medical centers, the NCI, and NIH
- Timelines and milestones created for participants: 1) manuscript submissions 2) grant proposal submissions and obtaining additional funding 3) national presentations and 4) progress reports
- Annual surveys from participants and mentors conducted to improve program organization, educational sessions, and outcome metrics

# ESSP Structure and Funding

## NCI ESSP Structure

- 5-year pilot program of three cohorts, each with 12 early-stage surgeon scientists
- Each cohort will be a 3-year program, staggered a year apart
- NCI will provide quarterly symposia: grant writing seminars, content area mentoring, scientific methods curriculum, and more

## Funding per ESSP Participant

- Annual budget limit is \$125,000 direct costs to cover 6 calendar months effort and other allowable costs including support for research training activities and travel



# Eligibility and Dates

## Eligibility

- Active awardees of NCI P30 Cancer Centers or CPACHE U54 Center institutions serving underserved health disparity populations and underrepresented students

- Application Due Dates: December 8, (2021, 2022, 2023)
- Earliest Start Dates: March 1, (2022, 2023, 2024)
- Expiration Date: December 9, 2023

## ESSP Participant Candidate Requirements

- U.S.-licensed surgeon scientist with active surgical duties at Eligible Institution
- Within the first 1-3 years of tenure-track academic appointment and must conduct research on cancer-related basic or translational science
- Must commit a minimum of 6 calendar-months (50% full-time professional effort) to the ESSP award
- No prior NIH funding (including being K12 scholar) with the following **exceptions:** Fellowships, Loan Repayment Program (LRP) awards, and individuals appointed to institutional T32 programs

# Nomination Requirement & Limitation

## Nomination

- The ESSP Participant candidate must be nominated by the Center Director (Principal Investigator (PI) of the P30 CCSG or PI of the U54 CPACHE) based on the candidate's qualifications, interests, accomplishments, motivation, and plans to pursue a career as a surgeon scientist with a focus on cancer-related research.

## Number of Applications

- Only one submission per year per NCI-designated Cancer Center made through the PI of the P30 is permitted (consortium centers may submit only one application) and one submission per year per CPACHE program made through the PI of the U54 is permitted.

# Contacts for Questions

## *For Cancer Centers:*

- The Program Director for the P30 CCSG Award, NCI  
Telephone: 240-276-5000

## *For CPACHE Centers:*

- The Program Director for the U54 CPACHE Award, NCI  
Telephone: 240-276-6170

## *For General Inquiries:*

- ESSP Program Officer, NCI  
Email: [ncicct@nih.gov](mailto:ncicct@nih.gov)

Notice of Special Interest: [NOT-CA-21-100](#)

Website: <https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/funding/nci-essp>

# Clinician Scientist Research Award (R50)

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# Background

- Outstanding clinical investigators at academic institutions carry out activities that are critical to the success of NCI clinical trials
- Research activities include accruing patients, developing national trials, and providing leadership for the clinical trials infrastructure of institutions
- Clinical duties and requirements to generate clinical revenue make it difficult for clinician investigators to dedicate the necessary time to clinical research activities
- Encouraging a career path in academia with stable funding is vital to retaining these clinician scientists

# Purpose of the Clinician Scientist Research Award

- Provide a career path and stable salary support for outstanding clinician scientists who want to focus on the design and conduct of NCI-funded clinical trials but who do not seek independent research funding
- There are no mechanisms currently offered by NCI that provide a clinical career path with *sustained* salary support
- Related mechanisms:
  - Cancer Clinical Investigator Team Leadership Award (CCITLA)
  - P30 Developmental Funds – Clinical Staff Investigator
  - K12 and K08 – Early-stage clinician scientist *mentored* research training
- Research Specialist R50 awards are for laboratory or core-based scientists

# R50 Eligibility

- Clinician scientists who have a clinical degree (M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.M.D., O.D., D.C., PharmD., N.D., D.V.M.), possess active licensure, and are actively practicing in an oncology clinical setting
- Individuals with a Ph.D. or other doctoral degree in clinical disciplines with direct patient contact such as clinical psychology, nursing, clinical genetics, speech-language pathology, audiology, or rehabilitation
- Cannot hold R01, P01, or other significant NIH funding
  - P30 funding or P50 Career Development awards, or national network funding allowable
  - Past funding will not affect eligibility

# Application Requirements

- 20% to 40% effort; maximum NCI funding cap of 50%
- NIH biosketch, letter of institutional support, 3 letters of recommendation
- Engaged in the conduct of NCI-funded cancer clinical trials at an academic medical center
- Track record of involvement in cancer clinical trial-related activities
- Any academic institution that carries out significant NCI-funded clinical trial activity is eligible



# Clinical Activities in Support of NCI-funded Trials

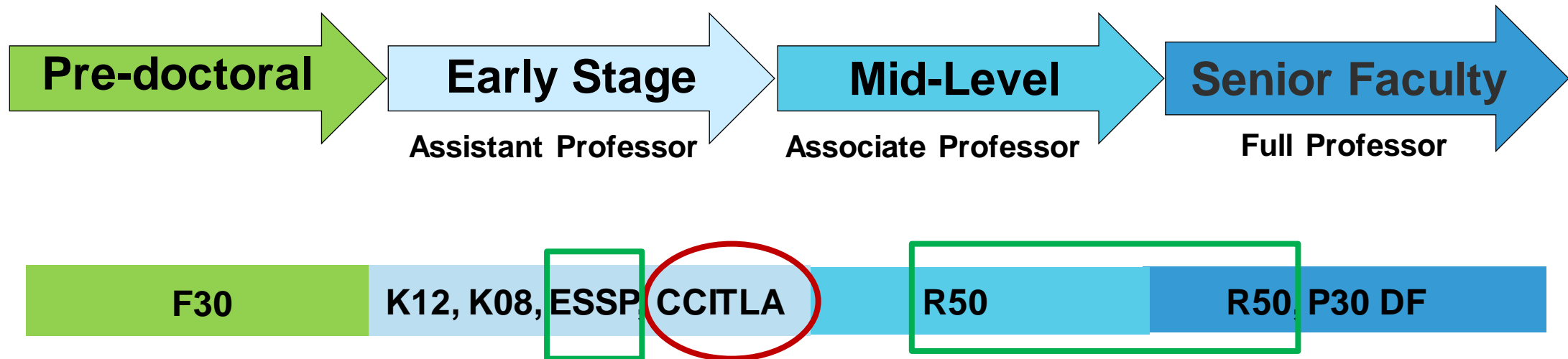
- Accrual to NCI-funded clinical trial networks
- Development of national trials
- Leadership in NCI networks such as the NCTN steering committees, national or site Principal Investigator of trials, etc.
- Leadership in the institution's clinical trials infrastructure
  - Examples: Directing and participating in activities of the clinical trials office, institutional review board, protocol review, and audit and data safety monitoring committees
- Leadership of the institution's disease or modality-based groups
- Special activities to ensure the inclusion of underserved populations in the institution's clinical trials

# PAR-21-306 – NCI Research Specialist R50 Award (Clinician Scientist)

- PAR Published August 20, 2021:  
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-21-306.html>
- **First Receipt date: 2/8/2022**
- **Earliest start date: December 2022**
- Applications are limited to one per institution per receipt date (three applications per institution in a calendar year) including resubmissions (A1)
  - NCI-designated Cancer Center consortia are considered one institution

# **Discussion: Reimagining the Cancer Clinical Investigator Team Leadership Award (CCITLA)**

# NCI Grant Funding for Clinician Scientists



ESSP – Early-stage Surgeon Scientist Program  
CCITLA – Cancer Clinical Investigator Team Leadership Award  
DF – Developmental Funds – Clinical Staff Investigator

# Cancer Clinical Investigator Team Leadership Award

- Launched in 2009 to recognize and support outstanding mid-level clinical investigators at NCI-designated Cancer Centers who are actively engaged in NCI-funded collaborative clinical trials
- Administrative supplement to P30 grant; candidates nominated annually by NCI Cancer Center Directors
  - 8 to 12 new awards per year
  - \$60,000 per year for 2 years; non-renewable
  - At least 15% effort; time protected by sponsoring institution
- 96% of recipients who have completed award (n=124, 2009-2019) are still in academic clinical research positions

# CCITLA Eligibility

- Physician or oncology nurse, clinical psychologist, or similarly qualified clinician with a doctoral degree
- Currently practicing in the oncology setting; board certified or equivalent
- Full-time faculty member

*Currently targets mid-career clinicians; plan to transition program to support clinicians earlier in their career*

- Potential for leadership of the Cancer Center's clinical trials infrastructure activities
- Engaged in conducting NCI-funded cancer clinical trials

# Discussion Questions

## Candidate

- What career stage should the re-designed CCITLA support?
  - At least **2 years** from initial faculty appointment, but no more than **6 years\***
- What qualifications or involvement in NCI clinical trials should be expected to demonstrate potential at this level?
- How do we attract candidates from underrepresented populations?

## Planned Activities – how to assess?

- How likely is it that the candidate will develop new capabilities that will advance their career as a clinician scientist?
- Do the planned activities support, improve and/or expand the cancer center's NCI funded clinical trials activities?

## Environment/Institutional Commitment

- Should a mentor(s) be identified?

\*Currently 3 and 8 years

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STOP US 50 YEARS**

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