



Jaime Merchán, M.D., Named Sylvester's Translational and Clinical Oncology Research Program Co-Leader

Jaime Merchán, M.D., is the new Translational and Clinical Oncology Research Program co-leader at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, part of UHealth – University of Miami Health System.



Jaime Merchán, M.D.

Dr. Merchán, who also directs Sylvester's Phase 1 Clinical Trials Program, is leading the Translational and Clinical Oncology Research Program alongside C. Ola Landgren, M.D., Ph.D., director of the cancer center's new Myeloma Research Institute.

The Translational and Clinical Oncology Research Program aims to advance early drug development and identify biomarkers, which are measurable substances that can help clinicians diagnose, predict, and prognosticate different cancers.

"Dr. Merchán adds a critical piece of the program, bringing solid experience and knowledge in early drug development as director of Sylvester's research program focused on phase 1 trials, which is the earliest trial phase in humans," Dr. Landgren said.



C. Ola Landgren, M.D.,
Ph.D.

More than 40 laboratory investigators and clinical researchers from 15 multidisciplinary departments throughout the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine work together in the program to advance cancer science from the laboratory to the bedside.

“Dr. Landgren is an expert in blood cancers and drug development in multiple myeloma. My areas of expertise and interest are in drug development in solid tumors. So, we have complementary areas of expertise and both of us have a track record of translational research – trying to move laboratory science into the clinic,” Dr. Merchán said.

Advancing Lab Research to Improve Patient Outcomes

Examples of ongoing studies in the Translational and Clinical Oncology Research Program include studies to identify new biomarkers in leukemia treatment, which could help clinicians better identify patients who are likely to develop resistance to a particular treatment.

Investigators are working to identify a biomarker based on the genomic signature in recurrent prostate cancer, one that would suggest which patients are likely to benefit from more intense or less intense treatment or radiation therapy along with hormone therapy.

Sylvester is among the pioneering centers in the U.S. with a phase 1 program looking at new oncolytic viruses to actually treat cancer, according to Dr. Merchán.



There are many more examples of the work Sylvester is doing to advance laboratory research to make it available to patients with cancer.

“The end result is improved patient outcomes at Sylvester, all the areas that Sylvester serves, and beyond,” Dr. Merchán said.



Stephen D. Nimer,
M.D.

The Translational and Clinical Oncology Research Program launched last year to enhance the translational capability of Sylvester’s already impressive research, according to Stephen D. Nimer, M.D., director of Sylvester, Oscar de la Renta Endowed Chair in Cancer Research, and executive dean for research at the Miller School of Medicine.

“As we continue to evolve as a cancer center, we are growing in size and in scope. This new research program helps usher discoveries made at the bench to the patients in the clinic,” Dr. Nimer said. “Drs. Landgren and Merchán have the experience and expertise, as well as the leadership skills, to build this program and make a great impact on improving patient lives.”

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