

# **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Tim Donahue, MD to share Pancreatic Cancer Progress Report 2025**

The Hirshberg Foundation is pleased to announce that Dr. Tim Donahue will attend the 19th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to share a 2025 progress report on pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Donahue will provide an update on promising new treatment developments for pancreatic cancer. These include advancements in earlier diagnosis strategies, surgical interventions, targeted therapies, and immunotherapies, which are beginning to show potential for this challenging disease. He will also review state-of-the-art approaches to medical and comprehensive patient care offered at the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases.

Dr. Timothy Donahue serves as Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology and Professor of Surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. He also holds a joint appointment in the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology, which supports his robust research program. As the Medical Director for Cancer Services, Dr. Donahue oversees all cancer-related care across the UCLA Health System. In his role as Director of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, Dr. Donahue is a highly skilled pancreatic surgeon, performing three to four pancreatic surgeries per week. He and his team tackle some of the most complex cases, achieving outcomes that rank among the best in the world. Dr. Donahue is deeply committed to providing patients with pancreatic cancer state-of-the-art care and personalized treatment. Beyond his clinical expertise, Dr.

Donahue leads a National Institutes of Health-funded research laboratory as Principal Investigator. His research focuses on developing innovative drugs and improving treatment strategies for pancreatic cancer. He collaborates extensively with researchers across UCLA to advance the scientific understanding and management of this challenging disease.

An important presentation for our pancreatic cancer community, we are so happy to have Dr. Donahue present **Pancreatic Cancer Progress Report 2025** at the 19th Annual Symposium.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Jon King, MD to discuss Surgical Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer: A Moving Target**

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to announce that Dr. Jon King will be joining us at the 19th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss the evolving nature of surgical treatments for pancreatic cancer.

Surgery is a cornerstone of treatment for pancreatic cancer that has not spread outside of the primary (main) tumor. While surgery to remove most pancreatic tumors is complex and has historically been associated with poor outcomes, improvements in pancreatic surgery in the past 40 years have made surgery reliably safe for nearly all patients. More recent advances have

brought minimally-invasive techniques, complex vascular (blood vessel) resection/reconstruction, and enhanced recovery after surgery into routine clinical use. These, along with effective chemotherapies that are frequently applied before surgery, means that more and more patients are candidates for surgery today than ever before.

Dr. Jonathan King is an Associate Professor in the Division of General Surgery at UCLA. He attended the University of Maryland for his M.D. degree before coming to UCLA for his general surgery residency. After residency, Dr. King spent two years in Pittsburgh, PA (UPMC) for a surgical oncology fellowship before returning to Los Angeles to join the surgery faculty. He is board certified in General Surgery as well as Complex Surgical Oncology and has particular interest in pancreatic cancer and disseminated peritoneal malignancies. He has expertise in robotic-assisted minimally invasive pancreas surgery and performed UCLA's first minimally-invasive pancreaticoduodenectomy (Whipple procedure). He also started UCLA's program for hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemoperfusion (HIPEC).

In addition to his clinical interests Dr. King has authored numerous peer-reviewed manuscripts and abstracts as well as book chapters in some of the authoritative surgical textbooks. Dr. King is an enthusiastic surgical educator and is developing the UCLA residency training curriculum for robotic-assisted surgery and he is a member of numerous professional societies.

A valuable presentation for our pancreatic cancer community; we are so happy to have Dr. King present the **Surgical Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer: A Moving Target** at the 19th Annual Symposium.

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# **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Shelby Yaceczko to share Staying Strong Through Pancreatic Cancer Treatment: Nutrition and Movement Matter!**

The Hirshberg Foundation is pleased to announce that Dr. Yaceczko will join us at the 19th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss the importance of staying strong through pancreatic cancer treatment through nutrition and movement.

This topic will review the intersection of diet and physical activity in maintaining muscle health and reducing whole-body inflammation. Designed for patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers, the session will explore evidence-based strategies for optimizing nutrition to preserve muscle mass and boost energy throughout the entire cancer continuum. Attendees will learn practical tips on incorporating cancer wellness strategies to improve overall well-being, enhance treatment outcomes, and reduce fatigue to stay strong.

Shelby Yaceczko is an advanced practice registered dietitian who specializes in complex gastrointestinal conditions. She leads the Nutrition for Safer Surgeries program and supports the Division of Digestive Diseases and Surgical Oncology patient population at UCLA Health. She is part of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, where she spends most of her time helping patients with pancreatic cancer improve their

nutritional status and overall wellbeing during their cancer journey.

An important presentation for our pancreatic cancer community, we are so pleased to have Shelby Yaceczko present **Staying Strong Through Pancreatic Cancer Treatment: Nutrition and Movement Matter!** at the 19th Annual Symposium.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Barbara Demman to present Empowering Pancreatic Cancer Patients with Mindfulness**

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce Barbara Demman will join us at the 19th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to show how Mindfulness can empower pancreatic cancer patients.

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which we focus on awareness in the present moment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind. Mindfulness offers additional support to people with pancreatic cancer and their caregivers by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression while also increasing positive emotions and enjoyment of daily life. In this segment, we will participate in a group activity of a guided mindfulness meditation.

Barbara Demman is a board-certified acute care nurse practitioner and clinical nurse specialist. She currently serves

as a hospice nurse practitioner and lecturer at UCLA School of Nursing.

Barbara completed a yearlong fellowship at the UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center. Her current research, supported by the Hirshberg Foundation, examines mindfulness-based interventions and decreasing symptom burden among patients with pancreatic cancer, as well as fostering connection and intimacy between cancer patients and their primary caregivers.

Barbara also has a passion for working with patients and families throughout the entire dying process in her hospice nurse practitioner role. She advocates for those who are dying and facilitating patient and family wishes and care preferences at the end of life.

An important tool for our pancreatic cancer community, we are so pleased to have Barbara Demman present **Empowering Pancreatic Cancer Patients with Mindfulness** at the 19th Annual Symposium.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Ziva Cooper, MD to discuss Cannabis and Oncology: What Pancreatic Cancer Patients Should Know**

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce Ziva Cooper, MD will be joining us at the 19th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic

Cancer to share up-to-date information on cannabis for oncology patients and what pancreatic cancer patients should know.

With sweeping changes related to cannabis legalization both for medical and personal use occurring across the United States, cannabis has become more accessible than ever. Cannabis formulations specifically for medical use have proliferated dispensaries in California offering patients non-traditional options that may potentially help ease symptoms associated with cancer treatment and the disease itself. The wide array of cannabis options can be dizzying leaving the consumer to wonder: How do the products differ? Which ones are 'safe'? Which may help with specific ailments? Audience members will come away with the background to understand the cannabis plant and its chemical constituents (i.e., THC and CBD), the known effects of different types of cannabis products, and important safety information.

Ziva Cooper, Ph.D. is the Director of the UCLA Center for Cannabis and Cannabinoids in the Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior and Professor in the UCLA Departments of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences and Anesthesiology. Her research involves understanding variables that influence both the therapeutic potential and adverse effects of cannabis and cannabinoids, the chemicals in the cannabis plant. Ziva served on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Committee on the Health Effects of Cannabis that published a comprehensive report of the health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids in 2017. She is also serving on the current NASEM Committee on the public health consequences of changes in the cannabis policy landscape. Her current projects funded by the NIH and California State include understanding the potential for cannabis constituents to reduce reliance on opioids, differences between men and women in their response to the pain-relieving effects of cannabis,

effects of cannabis as a function of age, and therapeutic effects of cannabinoids in patient populations. She is the immediate past President of the International Cannabinoid Research Society, a past Board Director for the College on Problems of Drug Dependence, an Associate Editor of Neuropsychopharmacology and is on several Editorial Boards of journals including Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research.

An important update for our pancreatic cancer community, we are so happy to have Dr. Cooper present **Cannabis and Oncology: What Pancreatic Cancer Patients Should Know** at the 19th Annual Symposium.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Annette Stanton, PhD to lead the Panel Discussion: Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers**

The Hirshberg Foundation is pleased to announce that Annette Stanton, PhD, will be joining us as the moderator for the panel discussion at the 19th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer.

Each year, we are honored to share the stories of pancreatic cancer patients and their caregivers. These honest and personal discussions provide valuable perspective, insight, and empathy for the journeys faced by both patients and their loved ones after a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. Once again, Dr. Stanton



will join us as our panel moderator to facilitate a meaningful discussion featuring two patients and two caregivers impacted by pancreatic cancer. Attendees will have the honor of hearing personal stories, perspectives, and insights from survivors. They will answer questions about how they navigated their diagnosis, what they wished they knew then, and what they want you to know now.

Annette Stanton is Distinguished Professor and former Chair (2019-2024) in the Department of Psychology at UCLA and a member of the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. An author of more than 250 publications and a licensed clinical psychologist, she identifies factors that promote or impede well-being and health in adults diagnosed with cancers of the breast, eye, lung, and pancreas. She then as well as tests associated psychosocial interventions to promote living well with cancer. tShe then translates her findings into action by developing and testing approaches to enhance well-being and health over the course of the cancer trajectory. Dr. Stanton has served as President of the Society for Health Psychology of the American Psychological Association. Her research has been recognized by awards from that society, the International Society of Behavioral Medicine, the Society of Behavioral Medicine's Cancer Special Interest Group, and the Cancer Support Community Los Angeles. Distinguished Professor Stanton also has been honored through a number of awards for undergraduate and graduate teaching and mentoring. Support for Dr. Stanton's research has included the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, the National Cancer Institute/NIH, the California Breast Cancer Research Program, and the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research.

We are eager to have Annette Stanton, PhD joining us to moderate the **Panel Discussion: Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers** at the 19th Annual Symposium.