

Advancing cancer care through clinical trials

As physicians in the United States, frequently we are told that you pick one. You're either a community doctor or you're an academic doctor, and those buckets do not blend. And Kaiser Permanente has actually proved that statement to be wrong. I am able to both think, encourage, learn, and study the next frontier, while at the same time see my patients most days and provide that consistency and care.

Clinical trials for oncology, more than any other field are vital. We function on the newest drugs. We function to improve our patient's survival. Until the day that cancer is cured, there's always room for improvement. And so therefore we need clinical trials. Clinical trials assess the standard of care versus the new drugs that are coming down the pipeline.

We try to select trials that have the highest impact. We have the children; the pediatric oncology group is very active in their clinical trials and involvement in the greater community.

We have the big 3: prostate, lung, colon. And those are trials that impact the greatest number of patients. We also are involved in both radiation, neuro-oncology, women's cancer. So, we really run the gamut in terms of our clinical trial engagement.

Immunotherapy has really changed the world for a number of cancer patients.

What we are trying to do conceptionally is to mount an immune response against that cancer, so not only does the primary cancer shrink, but the hope is that you're left with a memory of that cancer immunologically and it can guard you against further incidents of cancer.