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## March Ray of Hope: News from VCU Massey Cancer Center

VCU Massey Cancer Center <teammassel@vcu.edu>  
To: advos@vcu.edu

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Give now to support cancer research >

# RAY OF HOPE

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March 2021

## Director's Update



Photo credit: Official White House photo by Ana Isabel Martinez Chamorro

Dear \*|GREETING|\*,

It was a tremendous honor to host the first lady of the U.S., Jill Biden, Ed.D., and National Cancer Institute Director Ned Sharpless, M.D., at VCU Massey Cancer Center on Feb. 24. This was a historic moment and an opportunity for the cancer center to talk on a national platform about how we are addressing cancer disparities through collaboration and community-engaged research.

Biden's choice to visit Massey is proof of the impact of our research as a national leader in the eradication of cancer and health disparities. In case you missed it, I invite you to **watch the full program, read more about Dr. Biden's visit** and **meet some of our physician-researchers** who are making a difference.

Recently, I also had the great opportunity to be appointed to the **LUNGevity Foundation's Health Equity Council**, and to serve as guest editor for The Cancer Letter and to speak with our nation's second Black director at a national NCI-designated cancer center, Adekunle "Kunle" Odunsi, M.D., Ph.D., at the University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Massey is making real change in cancer care and health equity, not only in our community but across the nation. I am proud to stand with Massey Nation in our collective vision for a future, for all, without cancer.

Best,

Robert Winn, M.D.

Director, VCU Massey Cancer Center

Senior associate dean for cancer innovation, VCU School of Medicine

## Be Inspired

Meet the people who inspire us



## **Vanessa Sheppard, Ph.D., takes a stand against cancer disparities**

Though white women have a higher lifetime risk of a breast cancer diagnosis, Black women are at a 41% greater risk of dying from the disease. This is just one of many metrics that illustrate the reality of cancer health disparities in the U.S., a longstanding issue that is long overdue for change, says Vanessa B. Sheppard, Ph.D., Massey's associate director for community outreach, engagement and health disparities. Sheppard, who met with first lady Jill Biden, Ed.D., during Biden's recent visit, is expanding Massey's portfolio of disparities-focused research.

**[Read more](#)**



## Virginia General Assembly helps put a slam dunk on cancer

Robert Winn, M.D., director of VCU Massey Cancer Center, shared a video of gratitude this month to thank the members of the Virginia General Assembly and 2021 Capitol Square Basketball Classic sponsors for helping to put a slam dunk on cancer, raising more than \$25,000 for Massey. While virtual this year, the competition was no less intense, Winn notes, with members of the House of Delegates and the Senate going into the final stretch of the multiweek campaign. In the end, Team House pulled off a victory, raising \$10,661, with Dels. Delores McQuinn, Carrie Coyner and Sam Rasoul leading the way, and Sen Chap Petersen championing the Senate Team, which raised more than \$7,500. Massey team members join Winn in thanking co-commissioners **Ashley Allen** (B.A.'09/GPA) and Mary Lawson and our generous corporate sponsors for helping score big points, and all-important funds, for Massey Cancer Center.

**[View Robert Winn's video of gratitude](#)**

## Be Innovative

Check out our latest research news





## Massey experts weigh in on new lung cancer screening guidelines

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently updated recommendations that will increase eligibility for annual lung cancer screenings and help save lives. The revised guidelines lower the eligibility age from 55 to 50 and include adults who have a 20 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. Lung cancer is the second most-common cancer and the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. Screening saves lives, and these new guidelines will significantly expand eligibility for many Americans, particularly for women and African Americans.

**Read more**

## Be Involved

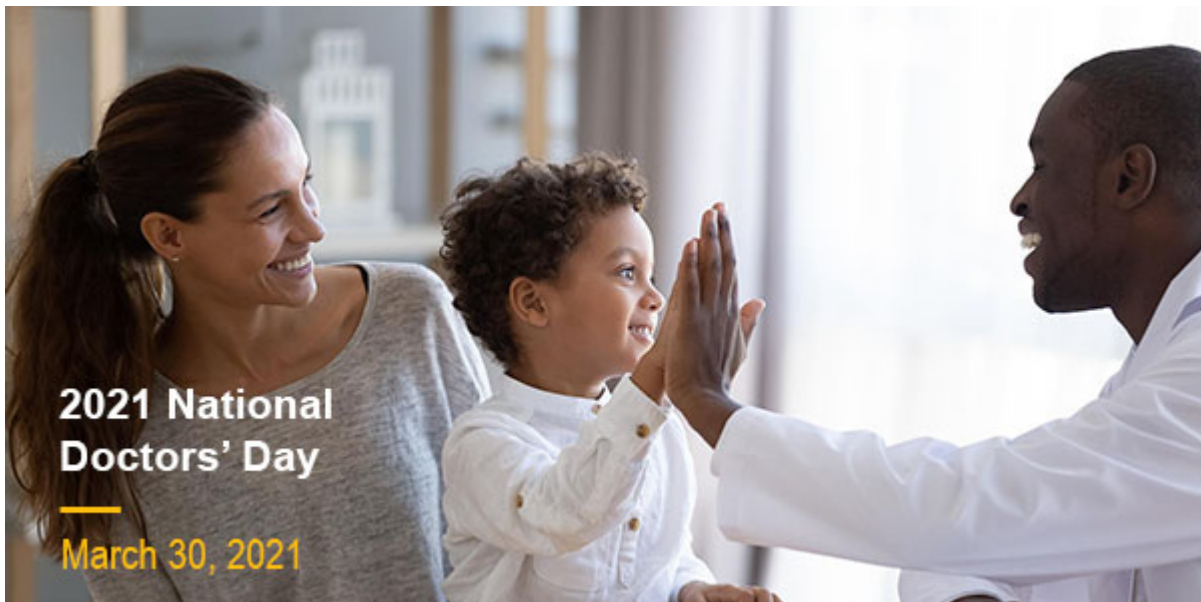
Support advances in cancer research



## Time to **STEP UP** to the 2021 Massey Challenge

It's time to STEP UP to the 2021 Massey Challenge to make your miles matter and make further strides against cancer. The Massey Challenge benefits VCU Massey Cancer Center and is the official charitable partner of the Ukrop's Monument Avenue 10K. Create or join a team and start fundraising now; then join us, virtually or in person, to walk Thursday, June 3, to Sunday, June 6, to support lifesaving cancer research. This year, several of Massey's physician-scientists are forming teams and embarking on a friendly competition, including Massey Director Robert Winn's "Team Massey Nation," the "Beam Team," led by **Emma Fields, M.D.** (Cert.'16/E), and more. Set up your personal fundraising page and learn more.

**Read more**



**2021 National  
Doctors' Day**

**March 30, 2021**

## **National Doctors' Day: Make a gift to honor a doctor who has made a difference for you**

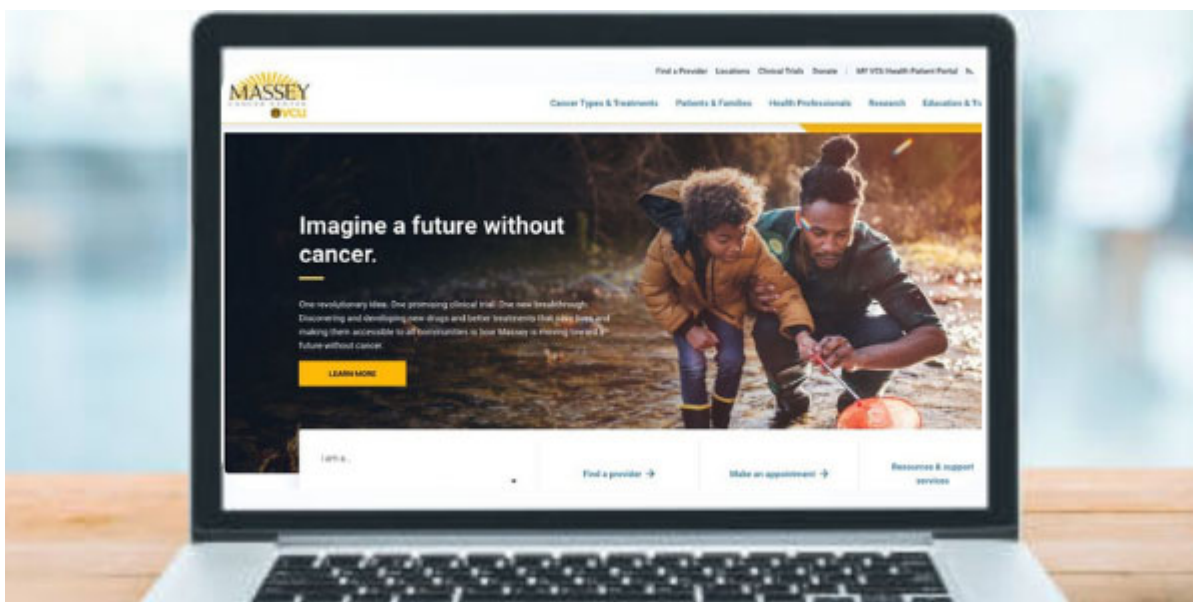
At Massey, our doctors are more than caregivers; they are champions, confidants and even heroes to their patients and their families. Massey's physician-scientists share a commitment to providing the best care for patients and families. They conduct research to discover better ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and control all types of cancer, and, as caregivers at a safety-net hospital, they provide the highest-quality care to all patients, regardless of ability to pay. Cancer does not stop for a pandemic, and at VCU Massey Cancer Center, neither do our doctors. On March 30, National Doctors' Day, we invite you to join us by **making a gift to honor a Massey doctor who has impacted you or a loved one.**

**Read more**

**Click here to make an honorary gift**

## **Be Informed**

Learn how we are improving health



## VCU Massey Cancer Center launches new website

VCU Massey Cancer Center recently launched a **new and improved website**. The updated site features a modern design and layout, simple and intuitive navigation, rich content including patient and donor profiles, opportunities to support Massey and more. Please visit and explore the website and let us know what you think.

**Visit the website**



## Closing the gap in prostate and colorectal



## cancer disparities: a community conversation

Massey was proud to recently co-host a robust panel of community leaders and experts to examine the cultural differences and interplay of biological, health system, lifestyle and social factors that contribute to worse outcomes in Black prostate cancer patients, in a quarterly series at the VCU Wright Center addressing pressing topics in health equity. Black men are nearly twice as likely to get prostate cancer and nearly three times more likely to die from it compared with white men. Massey's **Debbie Cadet, Ph.D.** (Ph.D.'08/E), moderated; panelists included Norfolk, Virginia-based filmmaker and prostate cancer survivor Terrance Afer-Anderson, whose new movie, "The Black Walnut," illuminates the topic and the importance of early screening in the Black community.

[Read more](#)

### Massey in the News



NBC 12 (March 18)

Patient story: [Cancer survivor celebrates 43 years of marriage](#)



The Cancer Letter (Feb. 26)

[Robert Winn, M.D., speaks with the second Black director currently at an NCI-designated cancer center](#)



The Associated Press (Feb. 24)

["First lady Jill Biden, Ed.D., visits Massey to address cancer disparities"](#)

ABC 8 News/WRIC (Feb. 24)

["First lady Jill Biden, Ed.D., tours research labs at](#)

Massey”



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**Cancer doesn't stop for a pandemic, and neither do we. [Make a gift or tribute](#)** in honor or memory of a loved one affected by cancer to support lifesaving cancer research at VCU Massey Cancer Center.

**At Massey, a future without cancer is how we will measure our success.**

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