

VCU Massey Cancer Center

NCI-designation Comprehensive Cancer Center Media Kit



A Cancer Center Designated by the
National Cancer Institute

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VCU MASSEY CANCER CENTER ACHIEVES COMPREHENSIVE STATUS FROM THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

VCU Massey Cancer Center has been designated a Comprehensive Cancer Center by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the nation's principal authority on cancer research and training. Massey's receipt of the highest level of recognition from the NCI places it among an elite group of cancer centers influencing a new standard of care through research, education and community engagement.

Massey's director, Robert A. Winn, M.D., is the first African American to lead a cancer center to comprehensive status. Under Winn's leadership, Massey has effectively championed a community-centered approach, recognizing community members as equal experts and strategic partners in its research efforts.

"We are so proud to reach this milestone, and to be leading the charge not just in research but in building trust and breaking down barriers between medical institutions and communities," said Winn, who also holds the Lipman Chair in Oncology at Massey. "We are truly the first of a new generation of community-focused cancer centers, where world-class science and research is informed by the people we serve, and accessible for all."

Since beginning his tenure as director of Massey in December 2019, Winn has focused on taking Massey's mission into the 66 contiguous localities in central, eastern and southern Virginia comprising Massey's catchment area. With the community's involvement, Massey has successfully increased clinical trial enrollment, expanded its transdisciplinary research collaboration and strengthened its cancer research training activities.

The NCI commended Massey for its significant strengths in the full spectrum of cancer research, robust pathway for cancer research training and education and plans to further enhance the diversity of its trainees and faculty.

The renewal of its Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) provides Massey with funding for its cancer research programs over five years and makes the cancer center eligible for additional information-sharing and resources reserved for the top institutions that demonstrate superior research capabilities.

The road to comprehensive status

Massey was one of the earliest cancer centers designated by the NCI in 1975, just four years after the NCI Cancer Centers Program was created as part of the National Cancer Act of 1971. The comprehensive designation is earned through a peer-review process demonstrating excellence in laboratory research, population science and clinical research.

NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers must conduct transdisciplinary research that bridges those three scientific areas, show that they are effective in addressing cancer concerns in their catchment area through effective community outreach and engagement, and that they integrate cancer training and education of biomedical scientists and community health care professionals.

“This important national designation reflects our mission and our commitment to the highest levels of treatment, research, prevention and control as we focus on improving and saving even more people’s lives,” said VCU and VCU Health President Michael Rao, Ph.D. “VCU and Richmond were among the first in the country to establish an NCI-designated Cancer Center, and I have pursued this comprehensive status for Massey soon after I came to VCU. During that time, we have taken our efforts to extraordinary levels to benefit all patients in need and the many communities we serve throughout our diverse Commonwealth. This comprehensive designation demonstrates that we put the needs of patients and our communities first. I am particularly grateful to my dear colleague, Rob Winn, for his extraordinary work in the last few years that catalyzed our ability to achieve this pinnacle level with the National Cancer Institute.”

Reducing the cancer burden in Virginia

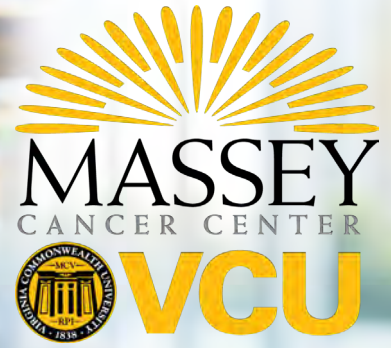
With Massey’s new comprehensive status, those living in its catchment area are promised even greater access to life-saving cancer screenings and clinical trials offering leading-edge treatments, more resources for critical education about cancer risk and prevention, and care informed by the top scientific minds brought to Massey through recruitment as well as its training of the next generation of physician-scientists.

“This is an incredibly exciting moment for Massey and VCU Health, and for the patients and families who come through our doors,” said Paula Fracasso, M.D., Ph.D., FACP, deputy director of Massey and senior vice president of the cancer service line at VCU Health. “With the increased funding from our CCSG, we will have additional research dollars to extend our reach into the forefront of science and translational work, that will provide better ways to predict, prevent, diagnose and treat our patients with cancer.”

“We celebrate Massey’s achievement as a huge win for our entire institution, and one that will help us continue to raise the bar for excellence at VCU Health,” said Marlon Levy, M.D., FACS, interim senior vice president of VCU Health Sciences and CEO of VCU Health. “The dedication to innovative research and education and to advancing health equity is a clear reflection of our health system’s core values.”

About VCU Massey Cancer Center

VCU Massey Cancer Center is working toward a future without cancer – one discovery, one successful therapy and one life saved at a time. Recognized as an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Massey is among the top 4 percent of cancer centers in the country influencing a new standard of care through research, education and community engagement. Introducing a new generation of community-centered cancer centers, Massey is leading the nation in establishing a 21st-century model of equity for cancer research and care. Community informs and partners with Massey on its research to best address the cancer burden and disparities of those the cancer center serves, with a local focus and a global impact. Massey conducts cancer research spanning basic, translational, clinical and population sciences; offers state-of-the-art cancer therapies and clinical trials, including a network that brings trials to communities statewide; provides oncology education, teaching and training; and promotes cancer prevention. At Massey, oncology experts collaborate in multidisciplinary teams to provide award-winning, comprehensive cancer care at multiple sites throughout Virginia. Visit Massey online at masseycancercenter.org or call 877-4-MASSEY for more information.



A COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

VCU Massey Cancer Center's comprehensive designation – the highest recognition from the National Cancer Institute – reflects our scientific leadership, depth and breadth of research, effective community outreach and cancer research training and education.

HOW ARE WE INFLUENCING THE NEW STANDARD OF CARE?

Advancing research and clinical trials for all through a community-to-bench model

Transdisciplinary teams work with the community as a research partner to better understand, prevent, detect and treat cancer.

Training the next generation of community-centric researchers and providers

Pathway programs and partnerships with minority-serving educational institutions and industry leaders support cancer disparities research training and the development of emerging scientists from diverse backgrounds across all learning levels.

Ensuring equitable access to person-centered care from prevention through survivorship

In addition to promoting cancer risk reduction and prevention, patient navigators and coordinated care teams guide patients from screening through treatment options, clinical trials and supportive services such as Massey's Cancer Survivorship Program.

COMMUNITY-CENTERED

Introducing a new generation of cancer centers — one that integrates community input into everything we do in order to close health care gaps across race, ethnicity and geography.

- Cancer Champions include community members and Massey researchers who work together to better refine scientific questions and serve as a touchpoint in the community.
- Massey serves as a leader in health equity efforts and training programs including the Robert A. Winn Diversity in Clinical Trials Award Program and the NCI P20 partnership with Virginia State University.
- Massey's Stand Up to Cancer grant seeks to reduce disparities affecting Black Americans by partnering with federally qualified health centers to guide patients through lung cancer screening.



“We are leading the charge, not just in research but in building trust and breaking down barriers between medical institutions and communities. This allows us to turn research into results and deliver truly personalized care.”

Robert A. Winn, M.D.
Director and Lipman Chair in Oncology

Q&A WITH ROBERT A. WINN, M.D., MASSEY CANCER CENTER DIRECTOR



How will this designation improve the lives of Virginians in Massey's catchment area?

Comprehensive is not just a name; it is validation from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) that we have proven excellence in laboratory research, population science and clinical research. The NCI thoroughly measured our impact on the community through outreach and engagement, while also considering our integration of cancer training and education of biomedical researchers and community health care professionals.

As an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Massey has access to more resources that allow us to ultimately become an even stronger, more aligned institution. The advanced discoveries in science coupled with community collaboration will lead to better patient care and healthier communities.

As other cancer centers have experienced in their regions, comprehensive status also brings the potential for pharmaceutical and independent research companies and related industries to initiate operations in Richmond. Being in closer proximity to Massey Cancer Center creates a research hub for them and provides economic benefits to the community by creating jobs and increasing tax revenue to support school districts and other municipal agencies.

What does this new designation mean for Massey's research efforts?

This designation allows Massey to be the first in a new generation of cancer centers that integrates the community in all of the research we do. Comprehensive status carries a substantial level of credibility in the field of oncology and offers Massey more research funding from the NCI.

Now that Massey has earned this recognition, we are able to recruit and retain the most competitive scientists from around the world. Their areas of expertise broaden the scope of Massey's research and allow us to advance science through new methodologies and take established areas in new directions.

Subsequently, Massey's entire team of researchers has more leverage in their funding applications because grants often beget additional grants. Increasing Massey's capacity for research opens doors to new discoveries and builds collaborations across VCU and with other research institutions.

What does "community-to-bench" mean and how can other cancer centers or community organizations adopt this model?

Community-to-bench means that the people we serve guide our research. Instead of following traditional models that keep much of the process inside a laboratory, Massey engages individuals in their communities; they are essential partners at every level of our research – design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination.

The data we collect from the community helps us to refine scientific questions. We can then take medical innovations back to the community through clinical trials to serve specific needs and have a greater impact on overall health.

Other institutions can adopt this model by holding a bi-directional dialogue with community members and infusing their needs into all research and daily operations. Speaking "with" people instead of "at" them allows greater access to information that can catalyze change to help eliminate disparities.



How does Massey's work align with the national fight against cancer?

Massey consulted with individuals throughout our service area to update the mission and vision outlined in our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Our priorities are aligned with objectives included in the National Cancer Plan and the Biden Administration's Cancer Moonshot 2.0. In an effort to cut cancer mortality by at least 50% in the next 25 years, Massey is working to increase access to lifesaving cancer screenings for early detection, especially in at-risk communities.

With a particular emphasis on lung, breast, prostate and gastrointestinal cancers, we aim to level the disproportionate incidence and mortality among key demographics. Massey is already making progress toward national goals through clinical research, tobacco cessation and cancer screening programs. Additionally, Massey connects recently diagnosed patients and those in active treatment to nurse navigators who are specific to disease type; the nurse navigators are able to guide the patients through the continuum of care, including survivorship.

What comes next for Massey?

At Massey Cancer Center, one treatment does not fit all. As our researchers continue to make advances in immunotherapy, more patients will benefit from it and other types of personalized medicine. Massey will also enhance the lives of a greater number of individuals facing a cancer diagnosis, including family members, through our Integrative Health and Survivorship Programs.

Massey recognizes that lowering cancer incidence and mortality requires not only looking at DNA but also ZNA, which is an individual's zip code and neighborhood of association. Prevention programs will focus on the intersection of place and space with cancer. Our Community Outreach and Engagement team will take more resources directly to communities, including with mobile vans.

Transportation is a challenge for patients, so Massey supports policy changes to close broadband gaps, allowing for increased telehealth opportunities. Building trust across historically underrepresented communities is paramount to the reduction of the cancer burden. Massey will expand current and initiate new collaborations with like-minded institutions; together we can and will move the needles in cancer research, prevention and care.

About Robert A. Winn, M.D.

As director of VCU Massey Cancer Center, Robert A. Winn, M.D., is leading the nation in establishing a 21st-century model of equity for cancer science and care with a local focus but global impact. The community is informing and partnering with Massey on research to best address the cancer burden and disparities of the people served by the cancer center.

Winn's current basic science research, which has been supported by multiple National Institutes of Health and Veterans Affairs Merit awards, focuses on the molecular mechanisms and novel therapeutic approaches for human models of lung cancer. As a pulmonologist, Winn is also committed to community-engaged research centered on eliminating health disparities.

In 2022, the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Diversity in Clinical Trials Career Development Program was renamed the Robert A. Winn Diversity in Clinical Trials Award Program (Winn Award), which is committed to increasing diversity in clinical trials and training the new generation of community-oriented clinical researchers.

Winn, who also holds the Lipman Chair in Oncology at Massey, is a Fellow in the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) Academy, and he serves on the Board of Directors for the American Cancer Society and LUNgevity Foundation. Winn is also a member of the National Cancer Policy Forum of the National



Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and of several other professional societies. In October 2023, Winn will become the president of the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI).

The recipient of numerous awards and honors, Winn has received the National Cancer Institute Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities CURE Program Lifetime Achievement Award; the American Association for Cancer Research-Minorities in Cancer Research Jane Cooke Wright Lectureship; the AACI Cancer Health Equity Award; and the Prevent Cancer Foundation Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Laurel Award for Increasing Health Equity.

Winn holds a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and an M.D. from the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor. He completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago and a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver.





ABOUT MASSEY CANCER CENTER

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- **Of 1,500 cancer centers nationwide, only 54** have earned the prestigious Comprehensive Cancer Center designation from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) as a leader in cancer research. Massey is one of only two such elite institutions in the commonwealth.
- **Massey's nearly 150 researchers** conduct lab, clinical and population sciences research to discover better ways to equitably prevent, screen, diagnose, treat and manage cancer. These researchers represent faculty from 38 VCU academic departments, four schools and three colleges. They are involved in collaborative research activities in three key programs: Cancer Biology, Cancer Prevention and Control and Developmental Therapeutics.
- **Patients at Massey have access to more than 200 clinical trials.** These trials offer cutting-edge treatments for all cancer types and prevention studies for those without cancer diagnoses. Massey's clinical research staff collaborates with other NCI-designated cancer centers, national cooperative groups and industry to offer patients access to a variety of trials, and extends its trials to affiliated community hospitals and oncology practices throughout the state.
- **Opened in 2021, Massey's outpatient treatment is delivered primarily at the VCU Health Adult Outpatient Pavilion.** Massey occupies six floors of the pavilion, offering cancer patients comfort, convenience and the latest technology. This includes a new MRI-guided linear accelerator (MRI-LINAC) that helps aim radiation at cancer tumors with pinpoint accuracy, sparing nearby healthy tissue – the first available between Pennsylvania and Florida. Equipment such as this, as well as infusion therapy, a new wig shop and a new family lounge for cancer patients and their families, offers a convenient, holistic care experience.
- **Massey is Virginia's largest and most comprehensive bone marrow transplant provider** and the first in the state for children with cancer, offering every type of bone marrow and stem cell transplantation.
- **Massey is leading the implementation of the Robert A. Winn Diversity in Clinical Trials Award Program,** a \$115 million initiative to increase diversity in clinical trials with programs for early-stage investigators from diverse backgrounds and for underrepresented medical students. Massey also serves as the National Program Office for the **Alliance for Equity in Cancer Care,** a \$20 million initiative funding select nonprofit health care organizations to develop and implement strategies aimed at improving equitable, patient-centered cancer care and addressing access barriers related to social drivers of health.
- **Part of a top research university (VCU) and academic health system (VCU Health),** Massey serves as a vital resource for education, teaching and training oncology health care professionals and cancer researchers. Massey's world-class cancer care is provided through the one of the top-ranked hospitals in Virginia and consists of more than 500 oncology clinicians at multiple care center sites across the commonwealth. Many of Massey's physicians are consistently voted Best Doctors in America® by Best Doctors Inc. and Top Docs by Richmond Magazine.
- **Massey is an international, award-winning leader in providing palliative (supportive) care** for people with chronic illnesses. It trains clinicians and administrators at hundreds of other institutions on developing and delivering this care.
- **Massey is home to the Cancer Survivorship Program,** an innovative model supporting survivors and their caregivers from the time of diagnosis through treatment and beyond. The program emphasizes prevention and risk reduction for recurrent and new cancers, management of chronic health conditions and patient empowerment, while contributing to the center's research and educational missions.
- **Massey was first in Virginia to offer FDA-approved CAR T-cell therapies** for the treatment of adults and children with lymphoma, leukemia and multiple myeloma.

(Data as of April 2023)

