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February Ray of Hope: News from VCU Massey Cancer Center

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To: advos@vcu.edu

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RAY OF HOPE

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February 2021

Director's Update



Dear *|GREETING|*,

As we recognize Black History Month, I am proud of Massey's bold vision to improve

health equities and outcomes for all patients.

As guest editor for the February edition of *The Cancer Letter*, **I reflected on my first year** as director of Massey Cancer Center. I also had the privilege to be part of the 26th annual **Women & Wellness**, held Feb. 9, two days before International Day of Women and Girls in Science. The event served as a reminder of the immense contributions to science and technology by women at Massey and around the world.

February also marks the **50th anniversary of the National Cancer Act**, which established the National Cancer Institute as we know it and set the stage for half a century of scientific discoveries and medical advancements that have positively impacted countless lives touched by cancer.

I am proud to stand alongside these dynamic and diverse individuals and look forward to continuing to recognize the contributions of African Americans, women and all leaders in cancer research and care. I hope you will continue to stand with us.

Sincerely,

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



Virtual Women & Wellness raises \$37,000 for

women's cancer research and celebrates the power of positivity and thriving with cancer

Massey's 26th annual Women & Wellness virtual event continued the time-honored tradition of bringing together dynamic women to commemorate progress in women's cancer research and health. Four Massey experts discussed advances in research, clinical trials and survivorship, as well as what thriving with cancer means to them. Breast cancer patient **Farrah Massenburg** shared her story, including her favorite tips for feeling beautiful despite cancer and her belief in the power of positivity and laughter.

[Read more](#)

Be Innovative

Check out our latest research news



Researcher Vanessa Sheppard, Ph.D., addresses access and equity in cancer care

Massey researcher Vanessa Sheppard, Ph.D., has a broad and growing commitment to centering equity in all aspects of patient care, research and training. As the director of Massey's Office of Health Equity and Disparities Research, Sheppard wants to make the office a national model for collaborating with the

community to reduce the pain and burden of cancer.

[Read more](#)



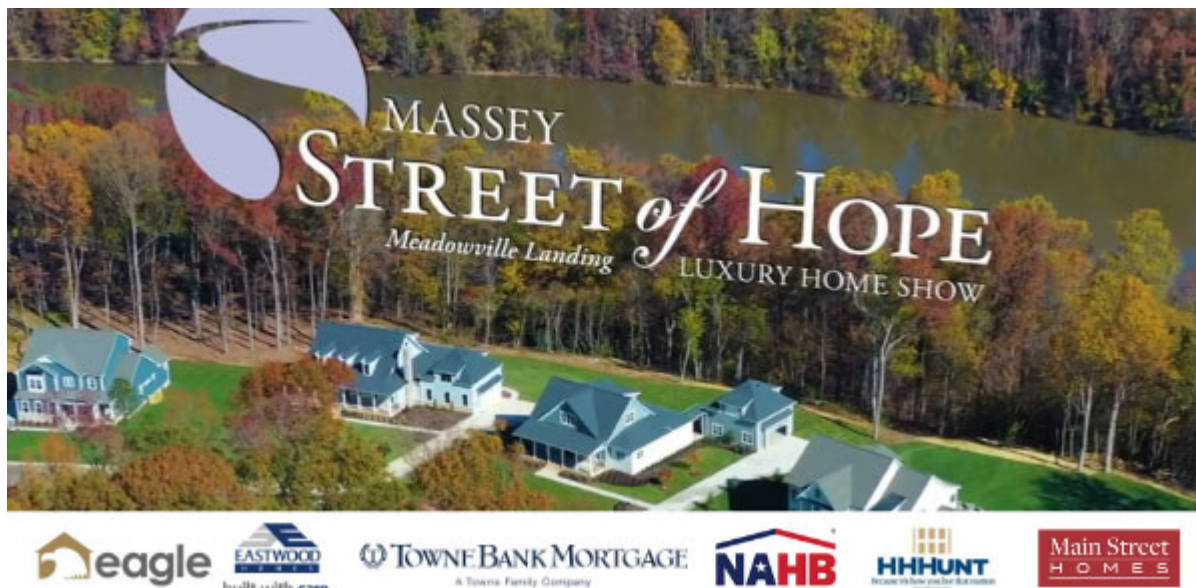
Researchers' review looks at national HPV vaccination rates and geographic factors

A team of Massey researchers, including Bernard Fuemmeler, Ph.D., **Askar Chukmaitov, M.D., Ph.D.** (Ph.D.'05/M), and David Wheeler, Ph.D., conducted the first systematic review of area-level data in the U.S. from 2006-20 to determine how geography, neighborhoods and sociodemographic factors affect HPV vaccination rates among adolescents and young adults. They proposed a set of recommendations and future considerations to overcome current barriers to effectively address and improve national HPV vaccination coverage.

[Read more](#)

Be Involved

Support advances in cancer research



2020 Street of Hope brings community together, expects to raise \$400,000

For cancer survivor and Massey Advisory Board member **George Emerson** (B.S.'78/B) and top RVA developers Eagle Construction of VA, Eastwood Homes, HHHunt Homes and Main Street Homes, the business of building and selling new riverfront homes in Meadowville Landing in Chester, Virginia, is about more than helping buyers find their way home. It's also about curing cancer. The 2020 Street of Hope has been offering private tours of five custom-built homes since November in support of cancer research at Massey. The event is expected to raise nearly \$400,000. Thank you to our 2020 Street of Hope sponsors, developers, industry partners and participants for giving the gift of hope to cancer patients and their families and for moving us closer to a world without cancer, one home at a time.

[Read more](#)

Be Informed

Learn about how we're addressing health issues and disparities



Black History Month and COVID-19: Davis urges listening, learning, taking action

In a recent video, Marcelle Davis, D.S.L., director of diversity, equity and inclusion at VCU Health, shared her thoughts on Black History Month, the current pandemic and what it means for Massey's Black and brown team members, patients and community. "Listen to one another so we can learn from one another, then act together," Davis said.

Read more and watch the video



Winn discusses COVID-19 vaccine and

oncology patients

Massey director Robert Winn, M.D., appeared on CBS 6 “Virginia This Morning” on Feb. 11 to share important considerations for cancer patients about COVID-19 prevention and vaccination, but reiterated that cancer therapies remain a top priority. As the vaccine becomes more available, oncology patients who have had a bone marrow transplant, stem cell transplant or CAR T-cell therapy might need to take special safety measures about timing and type of vaccine. Patients should consult with their cellular immunotherapies and transplant provider at Massey; they can contact their post-transplant coordinator through the My VCU Health Patient Portal or call (804) 628-7290.

Watch the video

Massey in the News



The Associated Press, Feb. 24

Jill Biden says health inequities have lasted ‘far too long’



NBC12, Feb. 25

First Lady Dr. Jill Biden takes part in panel discussion at VCU



The Washington Post, Jan. 31

HPV vaccine study shows major geographic disparities

WTVR CBS 6, Feb. 6

Buddy Check 6: Massey patient Farrah Massenburg shares her breast cancer journey



PR Newswire, Dec. 18

Winn appointed to American Cancer Society board

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 life-saving cancer research at VCU Massey Cancer Center.



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