

The MD Anderson CANCER **NEUROSCIENCE PROGRAM**
is proud to host the
International Cancer Neuroscience Symposium
 February 18 – 20, 2026
 TMC³ Collaborative Building, Houston, TX

DAY 1 of 3: Opening Keynote on Neuroimmunology Neurobiology and Neurotoxicity Sessions <i>Wednesday, February 18, 2026</i>	
Time	Session / Title and Speaker
8:15AM – 8:25AM	Welcome from the Cancer Neuroscience Program (CNP) Leaders & Symposium Chairs <i>Fred Lang, MD, Vinay Puduvalli, MD, Jim Ray, PhD, & Jian Hu, PhD: Co-Directors, CNP Moran Amit, MD, PhD & Nisha D'Silva: Symposium Chairs</i>
8:25AM – 9:45AM	1st Keynote Lecture
8:25AM – 8:30AM	Keynote Speaker Introduction <i>Moran Amit, MD, PhD</i>
8:30AM – 9:05AM	Immune Checkpoint Blockade in Cancer Immunotherapy: Mechanistic Insights Provide New Therapeutic Opportunities <i>James P. Allison, PhD 2018 Nobel Laureate, MD Anderson Cancer Center</i>
9:05AM – 9:30AM	From the Clinic to the Lab: Investigating Mechanisms of Responses and Resistance to Immune Checkpoint Therapy <i>Padmanee Sharma, MD, PhD MD Anderson Cancer Center</i>
9:30AM – 9:45AM	Question & Answer
9:45AM – 10:00AM	BREAK
10:00AM – 10:10AM	Welcome From the President <i>Peter Pisters, MD President, MD Anderson Cancer Center</i>
10:15AM – 11:45AM	Session 1: Neurobiology <i>Moderators: Yuan Pan, PhD & Ekin Demir, MD, PhD</i>
10:15AM – 10:45AM	Nerve Orchestration of the Tumor Microenvironment <i>Claire Magnon, PhD INSERM (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
10:45AM – 11:15AM	Subcortical Regulation of Breast Cancer Progression <i>Jeremy Borniger, PhD Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
11:15AM – 11:45AM	Redefining Perineural Invasion: Are We There Yet? <i>Nisha D'Silva, BDS, MSD, PhD University of Michigan (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
11:45AM – 12:45PM	LUNCH
12:45PM – 1:45PM	2nd Keynote Lecture
12:45PM – 12:50PM	Keynote Speaker Introduction <i>Chibawanye Ene, MD, PhD</i>
12:50PM – 1:35PM	Therapeutic Implications of Decoding Tumor-Neuron Communication in Diffuse Glioma <i>Shawn Hervey-Jumper, MD, PhD University of California at San Francisco</i>
1:35PM – 1:45PM	Question & Answer
1:45PM – 2:00PM	BREAK

2:00PM – 4:00PM	Session 2: Neurotoxicity <i>Moderators: Peter Grace, PhD & Paige Green, PhD</i>
2:00pm – 2:25pm	Strategies for Conducting Rigorous Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy (CIPN) Clinical Trials <i>Ellen Lavoie Smith, PhD</i> <i>University of Alabama-Birmingham</i>
2:25PM – 2:50PM	Neuronal EGFR signaling Primes Morphine Tolerance in Oral Cancer <i>Yi Ye, PhD</i> <i>New York University</i>
2:50PM – 3:15PM	Brain Health and Cognitive Function: Neurotoxic Impact of Cancer and Cancer Therapy <i>Jeff Wefel, PhD</i> <i>MD Anderson Cancer Center</i>
3:15PM – 3:40PM	Cognitive Deficits and Glial Responses in a Mouse Model of Pediatric Leukemia Survival <i>Teresa Reyes, PhD</i> <i>University of Cincinnati</i>
3:40PM – 3:55PM	Question & Answer for All Session Speakers
4:00PM – 4:20PM	BREAK
4:20PM – 5:35PM	10-min Oral Presentations by Pre-Selected Top Abstract from Each of the 5 Categories <i>Moderators: Moran Amit, MD, PhD & Monty Montano, PhD</i> <i>Awards Sponsored by Wiley Advanced Portfolio</i>
4:20PM – 4:35PM	<i>Neuroimmunology</i> Regulatory T-cells Produce Neuritin to Drive Tumor Innervation and Growth <i>Stephen Opoku</i> <i>University of Alabama at Birmingham</i> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
4:35PM – 4:50PM	<i>Neurobiology</i> AxonFinder Reveals Spatial Proteomic Heterogeneity in Tumor-Innervating Neuronal Fibers in Prostate Tumors <i>Ece Eksi, PhD</i> <i>Oregon Health & Science University</i> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
4:50PM – 5:05PM	<i>Neurotoxicity</i> FDA-Approved Riluzole as a Therapeutic Intervention for Cancer-Related Cognitive Impairments <i>Sanad El-Khatib</i> <i>University of California at Irvine</i> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
5:05PM – 5:20PM	<i>Neurobehavioral Health</i> Convergent Neuroimmune Signaling Underlying Rapid Antidepressant Response to Ketamine and Psychedelics <i>Greg Jones, MD</i> <i>National Institutes of Health</i> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
5:20PM – 5:35M	<i>Neural Neoplasms</i> Dynamic Circuit Remodeling During Glioblastoma Progression: Depth-Resolved Electrophysiology and Cortical Imaging Define Network Biomarkers <i>Tenesha Connor, MS</i> <i>Cleveland Clinic Research</i> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i>
5:35PM – 5:45PM	BREAK

5:45PM – 7:00PM	Evening Reception & Music-in-Medicine Live Demonstration with Audience Participation
	<p>Your Brain on Beethoven <i>Integrating real-time, 3D computer-brain interface mapping and visualization during a live performance of Beethoven's iconic "Archduke" piano trio</i> <i>Pianist, Mei Rui, DMA, Professor in Neurosurgery, MD Anderson Cancer Center</i> <i>Grammy award-winning violinist, Robin Scott, Professor, Eastman School of Music</i> <i>Celloist, Ahrim Kim, Professor, Eastman School of Music</i></p>

DAY 2 of 3: Neuroimmunology of Cancer Thursday, February 19, 2026	
Time	Session / Title and Speaker
8:00AM – 9:00AM	1st Keynote Lecture
8:00AM – 8:05AM	Keynote Speaker Introduction <i>Moran Amit, MD, PhD</i>
8:05AM – 8:50AM	A Neuroendocrine Factor Controlling Tumor Immunosurveillance <i>Guido Kroemer, MD, PhD</i> <i>University of Paris Cité & INSERM</i>
8:50AM – 9:00AM	Question & Answer
9:00AM – 9:15AM	BREAK
9:15AM – 10:45AM	Session 3: Neuro-immune Interactions at the Tumor Bed <i>Moderators: Nicole Scheff, PhD & Sébastien Talbot, PhD</i>
9:15AM – 9:45AM	Targeting Epigenetic Machinery to Overcome Therapeutic Resistance <i>Sangeeta Goswami, MD, PhD</i> <i>MD Anderson Cancer Center</i> (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)
9:45AM – 10:15AM	The Immunosuppressive Function of ILC2 Cells is Regulated by β2-Adrenergic Receptor Signaling in Breast Cancer <i>Elizabeth Repasky, PhD</i> <i>Roswell Park</i> (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)
10:15AM – 10:45AM	Neural Regulation of the Immunosuppressive Tumor Microenvironment <i>Paola Vermeer, PhD</i> <i>University of South Dakota</i> (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)
10:45AM – 11:00AM	BREAK
11:00AM – 12:00PM	2nd Keynote Lecture
11:00AM – 11:05AM	Keynote Speaker Introduction <i>Nicole Scheff, PhD</i> <i>University of Pittsburgh</i>
11:05AM – 11:50AM	Neuro-Immune Interplay in Cancer <i>Sébastien Talbot, PhD</i> <i>Queen's University</i>
11:50AM – 12:00PM	Question & Answer
12:00PM – 1:30PM	LUNCH
12:00PM – 2:00PM	Meet-the-Editor Session Come to the Levy Conference Room on the 2nd floor and have a 1:1 discussion with editors from various journals. <i>Dorothy Hallberg, PhD, Associate Editor, Science Translational Med</i> <i>Mattia Maroso, PhD, Senior Editor, Science</i> <i>Barbara Marte, PhD, Senior Editor, Nature</i> <i>John Pham, PhD, Editor-in-Chief, Cell</i> <i>I-Mei Siu, PhD, Senior Editor, Cancer Discovery</i> <i>Sam Rose, PhD, Neuron</i> <i>Alexia-Ileana Zaromytidou, PhD, Chief Editor, Nature Cancer</i> <i>Monty Montano, PhD, Executive Editor, Wiley Advanced Portfolio</i> <i>Ada Wong, PhD, Deputy Editor, Advanced Science (Oncology)</i>
12:00PM – 2:00PM	Poster Session <i>Posters on display all day; presenters at poster during this set time.</i>
1:30PM – 3:00PM	Session 4: Panel Discussion on the Future of Cancer Neuroscience <i>Wiley Live Podcast – Panel Discussion; 90-second clips from the podcasts</i> <i>Moderators: Monty Montano, PhD & Moran Amit, MD, PhD</i>
1:30PM – 1:50PM	The Neuroscience of Brain Cancers <i>Michelle Monje, MD, PhD (virtual)</i> <i>Stanford University</i>
1:50PM – 2:10PM	Pseudo-Synaptic Neuron-Cancer Signaling in Pancreatic Cancer: Lessons Learned <i>Ekin Demir, MD, PhD</i> <i>Technical University of Munich</i>

2:10PM – 2:30PM	Interaction Between Cancer and the Peripheral Nervous System: A Tale of Two Lung Cancers <i>Leanne Li, MD, PhD</i> <i>Francis Crick Institute</i>
2:30PM – 2:45PM	<i>Young Investigator Awardee Presentation</i> Cholinergic Nerves Support Neuroendocrine Features in SCLC <i>Rachel Davis</i> <i>Harvard Medical School</i>
2:45PM – 3:10PM	Question & Answer for All Session Speakers
3:10PM – 3:30PM	BREAK
3:30PM – 5:00PM	Session 5: Clinical Neuroimmunology <i>Moderator: Frank Winkler, PhD & Moran Amit, MD, PhD</i>
3:30PM – 3:55PM	Patient-Reported Outcomes as a Biomarker and Therapeutic Target for Immunosuppression in Cancer <i>Nicole Scheff, PhD</i> <i>University of Pittsburgh</i>
3:55PM – 4:20PM	Deconstructing Cognitive Aging Phenotypes with Senolytic CAR T Cells <i>Corina Amor, MD, PhD</i> <i>Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory</i>
4:20PM – 4:45PM	A Novel Triplet Immunotherapy for Glioblastoma <i>Douglas Hanahan, PhD (Virtual)</i> <i>Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research</i>
4:45PM – 5:00PM	Question & Answer for All Session Speakers
5:00PM – 5:30PM	PLENARY SESSION
5:00PM – 5:25PM	Neuronal Regulation of Low-Grade Glioma Growth <i>David Gutmann, MD, PhD</i> <i>Washington University School of Medicine</i>
5:25pm – 5:30pm	Question and Answer
5:30PM – 7:00PM	Networking Reception Sponsored by Wiley Advanced Portfolio <i>"The Checkmates" band providing live music</i>

DAY 3 of 3: Neurobehavioral Health, Neural Neoplasms, and “Inflamed Scientists” Sessions

Friday, February 20, 2026

Time	Session / Title and Speaker
8:00AM – 9:00AM	Keynote Lecture
8:00AM – 8:05AM	Introduction of Keynote Speaker <i>Nicole Scheff, PhD</i> <i>University of Pittsburgh</i>
8:05AM – 8:50AM	Neural Regulation of Metastasis <i>Erica Sloan, PhD</i> <i>Monash University</i>
8:50AM – 9:00AM	Question & Answer
9:00AM – 9:15AM	BREAK
9:15AM – 10:45AM	Session 6: Neurobehavioral Health <i>Moderators: Jeff Wefel, PhD & Erica Sloan, PhD</i>
9:15AM – 9:40AM	A Humble Precursor to Cancer Neuroscience: Biobehavioral Pathways in Cancer <i>Paige A. Green, PhD</i> <i>National Institutes of Health</i>
9:40AM – 10:05AM	Neuroimmune Mechanisms of Cancer-related Fatigue <i>Julienne Bower, PhD</i> <i>UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center</i>
10:05AM – 10:30AM	Cancer at the Dinner Table: The Promise of Psychedelics in Oncology <i>Charles Raison, MD</i> <i>University of Wisconsin – Madison</i>
10:30AM – 10:45AM	Question & Answer for All Session Speakers
11:00AM – 12:30PM	LUNCH
11:00AM – 1:00PM	Poster Session <i>Posters on display all day; presenters at poster during this set time.</i>
11:00AM – 11:45PM	Advancing Cancer Neuroscience Research Together: A Conversation with Wiley’s Advanced Portfolio <i>Monty Montano, PhD, Executive Editor, Wiley Advanced Portfolio</i> <i>Ada Wong, PhD, Deputy Editor, Advanced Science (Oncology)</i> <i>Moran Amit, MD, PhD, Symposium Co-Chair</i> <i>Tenesha Connor, MS, Top Abstract Awardee, Neural Neoplasms</i> <i>Ece Eksi, PhD, Top Abstract Awardee, Neurobiology</i> <i>Sanad El-Khatib, Top Abstract Awardee, Neurotoxicity</i> <i>Greg Jones, MD, Top Abstract Awardee, Neurobehavioral Health</i> <i>Stephen Opoku, Top Abstract Awardee, Neuroimmunology</i> <i>Rachel Davis, Young Investigator Awardee</i>
1:00PM – 2:00PM	Keynote Lecture
1:00PM – 1:05PM	Introduction of Keynote Speaker <i>Frederick F. Lang, MD</i>
1:05PM – 1:50PM	Cancer Neuroscience of Brain Tumors <i>Frank Winkler, MD, PhD</i> <i>Heidelberg University Hospital</i>
1:50PM – 2:00PM	Question & Answer
2:00PM – 2:15PM	BREAK
2:15PM – 4:15PM	Session 7: Neural Neoplasms <i>Moderators: Vinay Puduvalli, MD & Frederick F. Lang, MD</i>
2:15PM – 2:40PM	Single Cell Analysis of Gliomas in Space and Time <i>Mario Suva, MD, PhD</i> <i>Mass General Hospital</i>
2:40PM – 3:05PM	A 360 Degree Perspective of Glioma Evolution <i>Joseph Costello, PhD</i> <i>University of California San Francisco</i>
3:05PM – 3:30PM	Neuronal Regulation of Molecularly Distinct Pediatric Gliomas <i>Kathryn Taylor, PhD</i> <i>Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center</i>
3:30PM – 3:55PM	Axonal Injury Programmes Drive Gliomagenesis <i>Simona Parrinello, PhD</i> <i>University College London</i>

3:55PM – 4:15PM	Question & Answer for All Session Speakers
4:15PM – 4:30PM	BREAK
4:30PM – 5:45PM	Session 8: Inflamed Scientists Elevator Pitch Session <i>“Elevator pitch” by emerging leaders (3 min per speaker) + 8 min rapid fire Q&A from moderator panel</i> Moderators: Frank Winkler, MD, PhD, & Sébastien Talbot, PhD
4:30PM – 4:45PM	TOPIC: Tracing and Omics in Cancer Research Unraveling How Cancer-Associated Neurons Shape the TME and Cancer Progression <i>Vera Thiel, PhD (HI-STEM)</i> Mining Multi-Omic Complexity to Identify Targets Driving Neural Invasion in Pancreatic Cancer <i>Carmen Mota Reyes, PhD (Tech Univ of Munich)</i>
4:45PM – 5:00PM	TOPIC: Electrical and Metabolic Crosstalk Between Nerves and Cancer Divide and Conquer: Disconnecting Glioblastoma Networks for Breaking Therapy Resistance <i>Melina Müller (Heidelberg Univ)</i> Neurometabolism Drives Cancer Plasticity <i>Simon Grelet, PhD (Univ of South Alabama)</i>
5:00PM – 5:15PM	TOPIC: Adaptive Immunity DBH-expressing Immune Cells Shape Anti-tumor Immunity <i>Didem Cobanoglu, PhD (Texas A&M University)</i> Identifying and Disrupting Neuro-Immune Circuits in Cancer <i>Karen Dixon, PhD (Univ of Basel)</i>
5:15PM – 5:30PM	TOPIC: Innate Immunity Tumor-Brain Communication Shapes Anti-Cancer Immunity by Modulating Myeloid Cells <i>Chengcheng Jin, PhD (Univ of Pennsylvania)</i> TAM-driven Neural Regeneration in Severe Spinal Cord Injury <i>Sissi Dolci, PhD (Univ of Verona)</i>
5:30PM – 5:45PM	TOPIC: Neuro-immune Interactions in Cancer Targeting α2-Adrenergic Receptors to Modulate Immune Responses in Cancer <i>Jingjing Zhu, PhD (Ludwig Institute)</i> Nerves Limit Protective Immune Responses in Tumor Draining Lymph Nodes <i>Yuri Bunimovich, MD, PhD (Univ of Pittsburgh)</i>
5:45PM	Final Remarks & Meeting Adjournment