

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 Wednesday, February 18, 2026 | |
|---|--|
| Time | Session / Title and Speaker |
| 8:15AM – 8:25AM | Welcome from the Cancer Neuroscience Program (CNP) Leaders & Symposium Chairs Fred Lang, MD, Vinay Puduvalli, MD, Jim Ray, PhD, & Jian Hu, PhD: Co-Directors, CNP Moran Amit, MD, PhD & Nisha D'Silva: Symposium Chairs |
| 8:25AM – 9:45AM | 1st Keynote Lecture |
| 8:25AM – 8:30AM | Keynote Speaker Introduction Moran Amit, MD, PhD |
| 8:30AM – 9:05AM | Immune Checkpoint Blockade in Cancer Immunotherapy: Mechanistic Insights Provide New Therapeutic Opportunities James P. Allison, PhD 2018 Nobel Laureate, MD Anderson Cancer Center |
| 9:05AM – 9:30AM | From the Clinic to the Lab: Investigating Mechanisms of Responses and Resistance to Immune Checkpoint Therapy Padmanee Sharma, MD, PhD MD Anderson Cancer Center |
| 9:30AM – 9:45AM | Question & Answer |
| 9:45AM – 10:00AM | BREAK |
| 10:00AM – 10:10AM | Welcome From the President Peter Pisters, MD President, MD Anderson Cancer Center |
| 10:15AM – 11:45AM | Session 1: Neurobiology Moderators: Yuan Pan, PhD & Ekin Demir, MD, PhD |
| 10:15AM – 10:45AM | Nerve Orchestration of the Tumor Microenvironment Claire Magnon, PhD INSERM (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer) |
| 10:45AM – 11:15AM | Subcortical Regulation of Breast Cancer Progression Jeremy Borniger, PhD Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer) |
| 11:15AM – 11:45AM | Redefining Perineural Invasion: Are We There Yet? Nisha D'Silva, BDS, MSD, PhD University of Michigan (Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer) |
| 11:45AM – 12:45PM | LUNCH |
| 12:45PM – 1:45PM | 2nd Keynote Lecture |
| 12:45PM – 12:50PM | Keynote Speaker Introduction Chibawaye Ene, MD, PhD |
| 12:50PM – 1:35PM | Therapeutic Implications of Decoding Tumor-Neuron Communication in Diffuse Glioma Shawn Hervey-Jumper, MD, PhD University of California at San Francisco |
| 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 University of Alabama-Birmingham</i> |
| 2:25PM – 2:50PM | | Neuronal EGFR signaling Primes Morphine Tolerance in Oral Cancer <i>Yi Ye, PhD New York University</i> |
| 2:50PM – 3:15PM | | Brain Health and Cognitive Function: Neurotoxic Impact of Cancer and Cancer Therapy <i>Jeff Wefel, PhD 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 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 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 University of Alabama at Birmingham (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 Oregon Health & Science University (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 University of California at Irvine (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 National Institutes of Health (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 Cleveland Clinic Research (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 style="text-align: center;">Your Brain on Beethoven</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Integrating real-time, 3D computer-brain interface mapping and visualization during a live performance of Beethoven's iconic "Archduke" piano trio</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pianist, Mei Rui, DMA, Professor in Neurosurgery, MD Anderson Cancer Center</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Grammy award-winning violinist, Robin Scott, Professor, Eastman School of Music</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><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> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i> |
| 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> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i> |
| 10:15AM – 10:45AM | Neural Regulation of the Immunosuppressive Tumor Microenvironment <i>Paola Vermeer, PhD</i> <i>University of South Dakota</i> <i>(Last 5 minutes for Question & Answer)</i> |
| 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 <i>Come to the Levy Conference Room on the 2nd floor and have a 1:1 discussion with editors from various journals.</i> <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 Leanne Li, MD, PhD Francis Crick Institute |
| 2:30PM – 2:45PM | Young Investigator Awardee Presentation Cholinergic Nerves Support Neuroendocrine Features in SCLC Rachel Davis Harvard Medical School |
| 2:45PM – 3:10PM | Question & Answer for All Session Speakers |
| 3:10PM – 3:30PM | BREAK |
| 3:30PM – 5:00PM | Session 5: Clinical Neuroimmunology Moderator: Frank Winkler, PhD & Moran Amit, MD, PhD |
| 3:30PM – 3:55PM | Patient-Reported Outcomes as a Biomarker and Therapeutic Target for Immunosuppression in Cancer Nicole Scheff, PhD University of Pittsburgh |
| 3:55PM – 4:20PM | Deconstructing Cognitive Aging Phenotypes with Senolytic CAR T Cells Corina Amor, MD, PhD Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory |
| 4:20PM – 4:45PM | A Novel Triplet Immunotherapy for Glioblastoma Douglas Hanahan, PhD (Virtual) Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research |
| 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 David Gutmann, MD, PhD Washington University School of Medicine |
| 5:25pm – 5:30pm | Question and Answer |
| 5:30PM – 7:00PM | Networking Reception Sponsored by Wiley Advanced Portfolio “The Checkmates” band providing live music |

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

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 3:55PM – 4:15PM | Question & Answer for All Session Speakers |
| 4:15PM – 4:30PM | BREAK |
| 4:30PM – 5:45PM | <p>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> <i>Moderators: Frank Winkler, MD, PhD, & Sébastien Talbot, PhD</i></p> |
| 4:30PM – 4:45PM | <p>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></p> |
| 4:45PM – 5:00PM | <p>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></p> |
| 5:00PM – 5:15PM | <p>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></p> |
| 5:15PM – 5:30PM | <p>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></p> |
| 5:30PM – 5:45PM | <p>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 Bumimovich, MD, PhD (Univ of Pittsburgh)</i></p> |
| 5:45PM | Final Remarks & Meeting Adjournment |