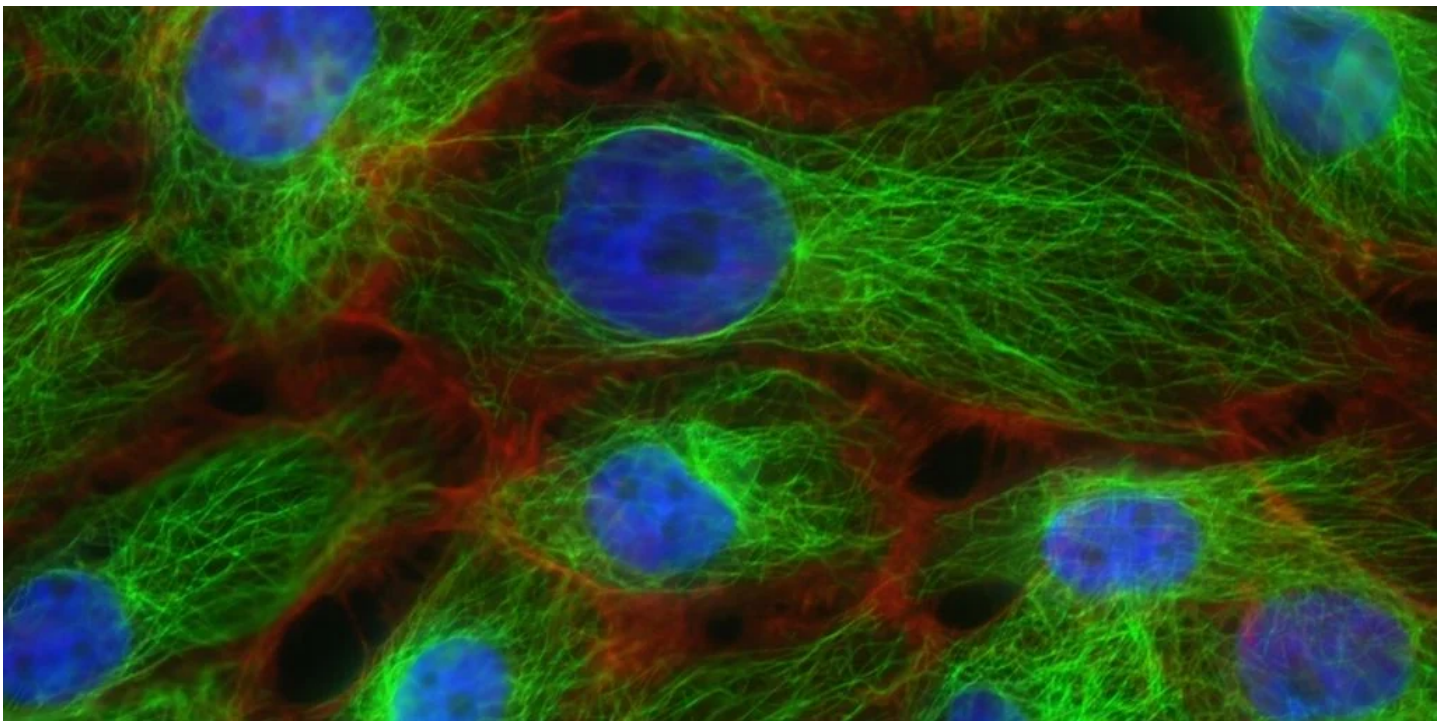


Health Pulse

## Chicago's biggest academic medical systems form breast cancer research network

By Jon Asplund



Credit: National Cancer Institute

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February 28, 2024 04:47 PM | 16 HOURS AGO

Three of Chicago's largest academic medical health systems are coming together to increase access to clinical trials for breast cancer research.

The Chicago Breast Cancer Research Consortium includes UChicago Medicine, Rush University System for Health and Northwestern Medicine.

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In addition, the release said, part of the consortium funding is earmarked for patient expenses, like travel and child care.

“We’re removing barriers for patients who cannot afford to participate in trials. They will now get to benefit from these innovative treatments,” Halee Sage, board chair of the Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Foundation said in the release.

The nonprofit foundation convened the consortium and will fund it for five years through a \$1.8 million donation.

The research will be led by a steering committee of Dr. Rita Nanda, a breast cancer specialist at UChicago, Dr. William Gradishar, chief of hematology and oncology at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern Medicine, and Dr. Ruta Rao, oncologist and medical director at the Rush University Cancer Center, the release said.

“Unfortunately, disparities in breast cancer outcomes among different racial groups in Chicago have been observed,” UChicago's Nanda said in the release. “This consortium came from a desire to improve breast cancer mortality and reduce disparities by offering a network of sites where patients can have access to clinical trials without having to travel.”

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The initiative drew praise from the new Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner, Dr. Olusimbo Ige, who, in the release, commended the effort "to improve access to clinical trials, particularly for minority populations and those who face barriers to participation. This focus reflects CDPH's own investments in comprehensive breast health programs that, through partners, provide screening mammograms, navigation support, and innovative community outreach to Black and Latina women."

The consortium is looking to launch an initial clinical trial in 2024 and have multiple trials running by 2025.

Research data, biological samples and medical images from all three sites will be housed at the University of Chicago, taking advantage of UChicago Medicine's infrastructure and expertise in multisite trials, the release said.


"Our goal is to ensure that all of our patients are included in clinical trials and have the opportunity to benefit from the advances we are making in breast cancer treatments today," Rush's Rao said in the release.



By Jon Asplund

Jon Asplund is a contributing reporter covering health care for Crain's Chicago Business.

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