

## JACKIE ABELS RECEIVES LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT AT SYLVESTER

and shares her breast cancer story – living with it and beyond.

Jackeline “Jackie” Abels knows the importance of a self-examination for breast cancer – whether you’re a woman or a man. Fourteen years ago, she found a lump in her left breast and underwent a successful lumpectomy. “I felt a small mass and went right in for a mammogram,” said Abels. “If I had waited, who knows how bad it might have been.”

A few years after her surgery, Abels began sending a monthly email to her friends, family, and whomever they care about, reminding them to “please feel” because it could save their lives. “My husband and I know of a few men who also have had breast cancer, so it’s not just women who need a regular checkup,” Abels added.

After enjoying good health and traveling the world with her husband, Michael Abels, M.D., a Miami pathologist, Abels received an unpleasant, emotional shock last November after a routine mammogram with Nilza Kallos, M.D., director of the Women’s Imaging Department at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

“After the mammogram, I could see from Dr. Kallos’ face that something was wrong,” said Abels. “She found another small mass, less than a centimeter in size, in my right breast. But the first thing she said to me was, you are not going to die. We can treat this successfully.”

Soon afterwards, Abels’ tumor was removed by surgical oncologist, Susan B. Kesmodel, M.D., director of Breast Surgical Oncology and co-leader of Breast Site Disease Group. “Dr. Kesmodel was very sweet and kind and knowledgeable as well as being a true professional,” she said. “I knew I was in good hands with her and the wonderful team at Sylvester.”

After the surgery, Abels received radiation treatment for six weeks at a community hospital to eradicate any remaining cancer cells. Along with her treatment at Sylvester, Abels was tested for BRCA1 and BRCA2, two genes that indicate a susceptibility to breast cancer. Fortunately, she tested negative for harmful mutations of those genes, as did her daughter, Amy Gelb. “Whether or not you have a family history of breast cancer,

it’s so important to do self-exams and have an annual mammogram screening,” Abels said. “I’m also very thankful to Dr. Kallos for her care throughout the years. She is a very caring and compassionate doctor and woman, who makes sure you don’t leave her office without knowing the findings of your screening. Breast cancer can be deadly, but the Sylvester team saved my life.”



Jackeline Abels, breast cancer survivor

## SYLVESTER NURSE PRACTITIONER HONORED FOR ADVOCACY

Jessica MacIntyre, MSN, ARNP, director of clinical operations at Sylvester, was honored by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) for her advocacy on behalf of Florida’s nurse practitioners.

MacIntyre, who is co-director of Florida’s only oncology fellowship program developed for nurse practitioners, received the 2018 AANP State Award for Nurse Practitioner Advocacy at the Association’s annual conference in Denver. “Jessica MacIntyre is a powerful advocate for nurse practitioners, who play an essential role in delivering skilled, compassionate care to cancer patients,” said Sylvester’s director Stephen D. Nimer, M.D. “We are proud to see her recognized with this important award from the AANP.”

Reflecting on her work, MacIntyre said, “It is vital to build awareness of the increasingly important role that nurse practitioners play in delivering effective care to patients in Florida and throughout the country.” MacIntyre is committed to increasing the specialized skills of nurse practitioners and opening up new career paths through a year-long fellowship program at Sylvester. The 52-week program, which began in 2017, allows nurse practitioners to rotate through various areas of oncology and hematology and other ancillary specialties.



From left: Jacinto Garrido, M.D., AANP Florida state representative, Jessica MacIntyre, MSN, ARNP, and Joyce Knestrick, M.D., president of AANP

## MOST EARLY-STAGE BREAST CANCERS MAY NO LONGER NEED CHEMOTHERAPY

Newly diagnosed cancer patients need some good news – now women with the most common form of early-stage breast cancer can get such news.

The recently released TAILORx study found that 70 percent of women with low to intermediate risk of breast cancer don't need chemotherapy if their tumors have the following characteristics: have not spread to lymph nodes; growth is driven by hormones; up to 5 cm in size; and do not overexpress HER2 protein. "TAILORx is a pivotal study that used genomic testing to predict outcomes, identify patients who would benefit from chemotherapy, and safely omit chemotherapy for women meeting the appropriate criteria," says Carmen Calfa, M.D., assistant professor of clinical medicine at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. While the research is transformative, Calfa pointed out, "The study does not apply to everyone with a diagnosis of breast cancer."

The 10-year, federally funded study tracked more than 10,000 women in the United

States and five other countries after surgery for early-stage breast cancer. It had previously determined that low-risk women could safely forego chemotherapy, though they still need surgery and endocrine therapy. The study's most recent caveat showed that chemotherapy did not benefit most intermediate risk women, either.

For years, doctors knew some women probably didn't need chemotherapy, but did not have the evidence to back up their theory. "The uncertainty gap has narrowed significantly and many women will now be spared unnecessary chemotherapy," said Calfa. Unfortunately, breast cancer can recur or present itself at a late stage in some patients. Several clinical trials are studying innovative ways to prolong survival or cure the disease. "Precision medicine—matching cancer patients with treatment, based on the cancer's molecular profile—is

among the most promising options in this age of personalized medicine. Sylvester is at the frontline of precision medicine. Our interdisciplinary Molecular Tumor Board is a resource for patients and physicians in South Florida and provides the platform for molecular testing and clinical trial participation," said Calfa.



## YOUNG FOUNDERS OF ONE CHANGE BRACELETS RAISE \$10,000 TO SUPPORT MELANOMA RESEARCH AT SYLVESTER

One Change Bracelets is a nonprofit organization that was started in January 2018 by Olivia Bacardi, Attie Crews, and Megan Keller, a few good friends from Palmer Trinity School who came together to start a local conversation on the importance of skin cancer prevention and raise money for cancer research.

"We have to start spreading the word because melanoma is one of the few preventable cancers, so education at an early age is key," said Megan Keller.

They are not only a great fashion statement – the bead in each UV-detecting bracelet serves as a reminder to apply sunscreen to prevent melanoma and other skin cancers, which are regrettably common among South Florida residents.

On September 10, 2018, Sylvester was honored to accept a check from Olivia, Attie, and Megan for \$10,000, which will support Lynn G. Feun, M.D., professor and co-leader of Melanoma Site Disease Group, and his research.

Sylvester applauds One Change Bracelets for its contribution and for playing a role in reducing the human burden of cancer.



From left: Lynn G. Feun, M.D., Megan Keller, Attie Crews, Olivia Bacardi, Cellie Cruz, and Cristina Herrera, ARNP, AOCNP

## SYLVESTER RESEARCHER RECEIVES GRANT TO HELP FEMALE CANCER SURVIVORS

Sara Mijares St. George, Ph.D., of Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, has received a grant from the V Foundation for Cancer Research, founded by ESPN and Jim Valvano, through a collaboration with the Dolphins Cancer Challenge (DCC).



From left: Jennifer Jehn, senior vice president of the Miami Dolphins Foundation and DCC, Stephen D. Nimer, M.D., director of Sylvester, Sara M. St. George, Ph.D., Lesley Visser, Twan Russell, and Keith Goralski

This Early Career Investigator Grant will fund a study led by Sara M. St. George, Ph.D., associate professor of public health sciences, that will use smartphones and tablets to connect Hispanic and black female cancer survivors and provide them with information to improve weight, physical activity, and nutrition for participating survivors and their family members.

“Obesity is the second-leading preventable cause of cancer behind smoking. Not only does it increase one’s risk of getting cancer, it also increases the risk of mortality in those already diagnosed with cancer,” said St. George. “This makes the prevention and treatment of obesity an important priority. I’m excited to explore innovative ways to empower female cancer survivors to help their families lead healthy lifestyles.”

Recruitment for this research, which is a digital health intervention, is just getting started. It will focus on survivors of breast, endometrial, and ovarian cancer. St. George is working with three Sylvester oncologists who specialize in these cancers to find survivors who have completed active treatment and are grandmothers, in order to study the multi-generational impact.

## SYLVESTER LAUNCHES UCARE PERSONAL FUNDRAISING WEBSITE

Turn a meaningful moment in your life into an opportunity to support cancer research.

A UCARE personal fundraising campaign is a fun, empowering way for you to share your story and partner with Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center in the “Pursuit of Your Cure.” With UCARE, you can create your own online campaign to raise money for cancer-related research that is important to YOU.

It’s easy! Simply start by going to [ucare.miami.edu](http://ucare.miami.edu) and choosing a theme or an occasion to kick off your fundraising campaign. Next, set a monetary goal and choose the cancer-related cause that is important to you. Last, customize your page and share your story with friends, family, and the community while encouraging them to donate to your page. Every dollar you raise will be designated to supporting a team of Sylvester physicians and researchers, who are continually discovering new ways to improve treatments and the quality of life for people living with cancer.



If you are interested in starting your first UCARE fundraiser, contact Joshua Tessier at (305) 243-1663 or [j.tessier@med.miami.edu](mailto:j.tessier@med.miami.edu).

## NEW FACES AT SYLVESTER



### DEAN HENRI R. FORD, M.D., MHA

At the age of 13, **Henri R. Ford, M.D., MHA**, fled with his family from the government of Papa Doc Duvalier to settle among the Haitian community in Brooklyn, New York, and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Princeton and an M.D. from Harvard Medical School that primed him to become the senior vice president and University chief of surgery at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA). On June 1, 2018, he joined the University of Miami's Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine as its new dean. "As I reflect on my journey in American medicine, I feel that I've been preparing all my life to assume what is an incredibly important role for such a time as this," said Ford. As a physician-scientist, educator, and administrator, Ford has promised to establish a culture of excellence in scientific research and promote the translation of discoveries into interventions that will transform lives, build healthier communities, and improve global health.



### CRAIG H. MOSKOWITZ, M.D.

**Craig H. Moskowitz, M.D.**, one of the world's leading experts on lymphoma, joined Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center on May 14, 2018, and is board certified in internal medicine, medical oncology, and hematology. As the physician-in-chief for Sylvester's Oncology Service Line, Moskowitz will be responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of high-quality, value-based oncology care at the main campus and satellites.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 27, 2018

**ACS MAKING STRIDES  
MIAMI-DADE  
MARLINS PARK**

[makingstrides.acsevents.org](http://makingstrides.acsevents.org)

November 3, 2018

**LLS WALK  
MIAMI  
BAYFRONT PARK**

[lightthenight.org](http://lightthenight.org)

November 17, 2018

**LLS WALK  
FT. LAUDERDALE  
ESPLANADE PARK**

[lightthenight.org](http://lightthenight.org)

April 6, 2019

**DCC IX  
HARD ROCK  
STADIUM**

[dolphinscancerchallenge.com](http://dolphinscancerchallenge.com)

FOR QUESTIONS, YOU CAN CONTACT SYLVESTER ADVANCEMENT AT [UMSYLVESTERDEVELOP@MED.MIAMI.EDU](mailto:UMSYLVESTERDEVELOP@MED.MIAMI.EDU) OR (305) 243-9088.

If you do not wish to receive further fundraising communications from the University of Miami Medical Programs/UHealth System, please send your request either by email to the following address: [medoptout@med.miami.edu](mailto:medoptout@med.miami.edu) or mail your request to the Office of Privacy & Data Security, P.O. Box 019132 (M-879), Miami, Florida 33101. Be sure to include the following: Name, Address, Phone Number and Email address. Only complete requests can be processed. You may receive additional communication during the processing of your request.

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