SEATTLE, Sept. 17, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Frederick R. Appelbaum, M.D., a world expert in the research and treatment of blood cancers who for the past two decades has served as senior vice president and director of the Clinical Research Division at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, has been named executive vice president and deputy director of Fred Hutch. His appointment is effective immediately.

"We are all delighted that Fred, who has essentially lived his life at the Hutch, will now devote his energies and experience to telling our story to the world outside our walls," said Lawrence Corey, M.D.
, president and director of Fred Hutch. "Fred's experience, together with his vast knowledge of science and the history of the Hutch, will be invaluable in developing the community relationships and programs that we and our clinical partner, the
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
, need for continued growth and impact."

While he will continue to conduct research, in his new role representing the Hutch Appelbaum will lead the institution's strategic research partnerships. "Fred is already an international figure in oncology, and he will devote more time to working with the National Cancer Institute and other federal agencies," Corey said.

As deputy director Appelbaum also will focus on maintaining the fiscal health of Fred Hutch through sustained federal funding and other revenue sources, including philanthropy and technology transfer.

"The mission of Fred Hutch is to eliminate cancer as a cause of suffering and death. If we are going to be successful in that effort, we need continued resources, and helping to ensure that will be a big part of my new role," Appelbaum said.

One such example is working with the NIH and National Cancer Institute to secure continuous renewal of the Cancer Center Support Grant , which funds the infrastructure of the Fred Hutchinson/University of Washington Cancer Consortium , one of 41 NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers nationwide. Other initiatives involve the interaction of the Hutch with its partners in support of initiatives such as a joint UW/Fred Hutch program in cancer molecular diagnostics currently under development.

"My new role will allow me to focus more specifically on the implementation of these key scientific strategies and partnerships. I truly believe that these initiatives will have a profound and lasting impact on the future of Fred Hutch," he said.

**Working to share research advances with the community**

Appelbaum's responsibilities also will include ensuring that the Hutch's clinical research advances are effectively shared with the medical community, particularly in the area of cutting-edge cancer diagnostic tools that help inform the best treatment based on the genetic and molecular characteristics of cancer.

"It used to be that cancer was defined by the organ involved: breast cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer. However, today we know that there are many genetic subtypes of these cancers. Understanding the genetics behind the cancer lets us choose therapies that are more precise and more effective," Appelbaum said. "Tests we've developed in collaboration with UW to genetically profile tumors frequently are not used by practitioners locally and regionally. I will work to make sure our research results are better implemented by the medical community."

In addition to leading the Fred Hutch Clinical Research Division for the past two decades, Appelbaum since 1998 has served as head of the Division of Medical Oncology at the Universit y of Washington

School of Medicine and president of Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, the cancer-treatment arm of Fred Hutch, UW and Seattle Children's.

While Appelbaum will remain president of SCCA, he will step down as director of the Fred Hutch Clinical Research Division and UW Division of Medical Oncology. Plans for transition are being finalized.

**A leader in the research and treatment of leukemia and other blood cancers**

Appelbaum's research focuses on the biology and treatment of leukemias, lymphomas and other blood cancers. He was the lead author of the first paper to describe the successful use of autologous bone marrow transplantation, a therapy now used in more than 30,000 patients annually. He was also a key contributor to the discovery and development of gemtuzumab ozogamicin, known commercially as Mylotarg, the first monoclonal antibody approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat acute myeloid leukemia.

Appelbaum joined the faculties at Fred Hutch and UW in 1978 after receiving his medical oncology fellowship training at the National Cancer Institute. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College (cum laude) and Tufts University School of Medicine, and he completed his internal medicine training at the University of Michigan Medical Center.

**The 'father of bone marrow transplantation' recruited Appelbaum to Fred Hutch**

Appelbaum was recruited to the Hutch by his role model, the late E. Donnall Thomas, M.D., the "father of bone marrow transplantation." Thomas, director emeritus of the Clinical Research Division, in 1990 received the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for pioneering the lifesaving procedure, which, Appelbaum estimates, has been used in more than 1 million patients worldwide.

"In my second year of medical school in 1970 I happened to stumble across Don Thomas' initial description of the first use of human marrow transplantation to successfully treat a patient with leukemia. I thought it was the most amazing thing I had ever read," Appelbaum recalled.

After completing his medical school and house officer training, while doing transplantation research at the NCI, Appelbaum optimized methods for cryopreservation of human bone marrow and led the aforementioned first clinical trial that demonstrated the utility of autologous (self-to-self) marrow transplantation.

"While at the NCI I was fortunate enough to publish several papers and will never forget the day when the phone rang and it was Don Thomas on the other end, asking me if I would possibly be interested in coming to Seattle to work with him," he said.

Appelbaum joined Thomas and colleagues at the Hutch in the late '70s and led the trials that defined the role of transplantation in the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia (AML), myelodysplasia and malignant lymphoma. He continues to study the biology of AML and mechanisms of drug resistance.

**A national leader in the conduct of clinical trials**

Beyond his own research, Appelbaum has been a national leader in the conduct of clinical trials. In 1980, as part of the Southwest Oncology Group, a cancer research cooperative, he formed the first multi-center bone marrow transplant clinical trials group. This concept eventually evolved into the federally funded Bone Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network, of which he is chair-elect. For more than 20 years Appelbaum served as chair of the SWOG Leukemia Committee, which designs and conducts clinical trials for leukemia.

Appelbaum is past chair of the NCI Board of Scientific Advisors and has served on the boards of a number of scientific societies, including the American Society of Hematology, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR)

and the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (ASBMT).

Currently he serves on the NCI Leukemia Steering Committee and on the advisory committees of many organizations, including Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Yale Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center, University of Michigan Cancer Center, University of California San Francisco Cancer Center and the AACR Stand Up to Cancer Scientific Advisory Committee.

His honors and awards include election to the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society, the ASCO Statesman Award and the ASBMT's E.D. Thomas Lecture and Award.

Appelbaum is one of two deputy directors at Fred Hutch; Mark T. Groudine, M.D., Ph.D. , former director and member of the Hutch's Basic Sciences Division, has served as deputy director since 1997 and executive vice president of the Hutch since 2005.

"Mark will continue to devote himself to the complex array of issues that involve faculty and staff, and he will continue to represent the Hutch on the SCCA board," Corey said.

At Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center , home to three Nobel laureates, interdisciplinary teams of world-renowned scientists seek new and innovative ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. Fred Hutch's pioneering work in bone marrow transplantation led to the development of immunotherapy, which harnesses the power of the immune system to treat cancer with minimal side effects. An independent, nonprofit research institute based in Seattle, Fred Hutch houses the nation's first and largest cancer prevention research program, as well as the clinical coordinating center of the Women's Health Initiative and the international headquarters of the HIV Vaccine Trials Network.
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