

Call for Investigators

Building the Kidney Cancer Patient Laboratory

Pilot Funding Opportunity

We are delighted to announce that the Kidney Cancer Program (KCP) has received a **\$500,000 philanthropic award** from the Pasarow Foundation to launch the **Patient Laboratory** — a bold effort to transform how we study and care for patients with kidney cancer.

The vision is to **deeply characterize individual patient tumors by bringing together the latest technologies**. The goal is to create an **integrated framework that brings together physicians and basic/translational investigators**. Multiple technologies will be applied simultaneously to the same patient specimens and linked to detailed clinical, imaging, pathological, and longitudinal outcome data. **Investigators will become active members of multidisciplinary patient research and care teams, working alongside physicians.**

This initiative will build upon and synergize with several key KCP resources:

- **Kidney Cancer Explorer**, a database integrating clinical and research data in real time.
- **The SPARK collaboration** with Regeneron, which includes whole-exome sequencing (WES) and RNAseq of our kidney cancer library (**>3,000 primary tumors and metastases**) with a planned expansion to include FFPE samples (**>2,000 additional samples**).
- **A collaboration with Natera**, enabling prospective collection and analysis of **circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA)** to monitor disease evolution, treatment response, and minimal residual disease over time.
- **Our tumorgraft platform** enabling functional studies and mechanistic investigation using patient-derived mouse models.
- **Other ongoing efforts in digital pathology and organoids.**

Together, these complementary efforts create an unprecedented opportunity to understand kidney cancer across multiple scales—from tissue architecture and genomics to circulating biomarkers and functional modeling.

We are seeking participation from UT Southwestern faculty investigators. We invite basic and translational researchers to apply technologies or analytical approaches that can provide new biological insights into patient tumors. We welcome proposals spanning spatial biology, proteomics, metabolomics, imaging, wearables, functional genomics, single-cell approaches, immune profiling, computational biology, AI, systems biology, etc.

Our goal is to apply **multiple complementary technologies to each patient**, creating rich, multidimensional datasets that will generate discoveries impossible through any single approach alone.

Application

Interested investigators should submit a brief application (approximately one page) that includes:

1. One to two paragraphs describing:

- the proposed technology or analytical approach;
- the scientific question(s) the approach will address;
- how the approach will contribute to the Patient Laboratory initiative;

2. A brief budget outlining anticipated cost per patient, with justification of major reagent, assay, or technology-related expenses.

Because our objective is to integrate numerous technologies, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness will be important considerations. Approaches with lower per-patient costs that enable broad participation and complement other technologies will be prioritized. Funding is intended primarily to support reagents, assays, and other direct costs required to implement the proposed technology; personnel salary support is not anticipated.

Eligibility and Submission

UT Southwestern faculty investigators. Applications should be submitted to the KCPDRA@UTsouthwestern by **September 18, 2026**.

A Unique Opportunity

This initiative offers a **rare opportunity for basic scientists to become directly engaged in patient-centered research alongside clinicians delivering patient care**. Participating investigators will work closely with medical oncologists, surgeons, radiation oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, computational scientists, and other investigators while participating in multidisciplinary patient care and research discussions. **By integrating mechanistic science with clinical decision-making, we hope to create a new model for translational research**—one in which discoveries emerge from the comprehensive study of individual patients and rapidly inform future patient care.

The Project leadership team (James Brugarolas, Payal Kapur and Vitaly Margulis) is available to discuss proposals with interested parties.

We hope you will join us in building the Kidney Cancer Patient Laboratory and helping redefine precision medicine through truly integrated, multidisciplinary investigation.