
Cancer Epidemiology and Population Science (CEPS)

EAB MEETING

April 2, 2025



CHANGING MEDICINE.
CHANGING LIVES.®

Leadership



PROGRAM CO-LEADER

Mary Charlton, PhD



ASSISTANT PROGRAM LEADER

Jess Gorzelitz, PhD

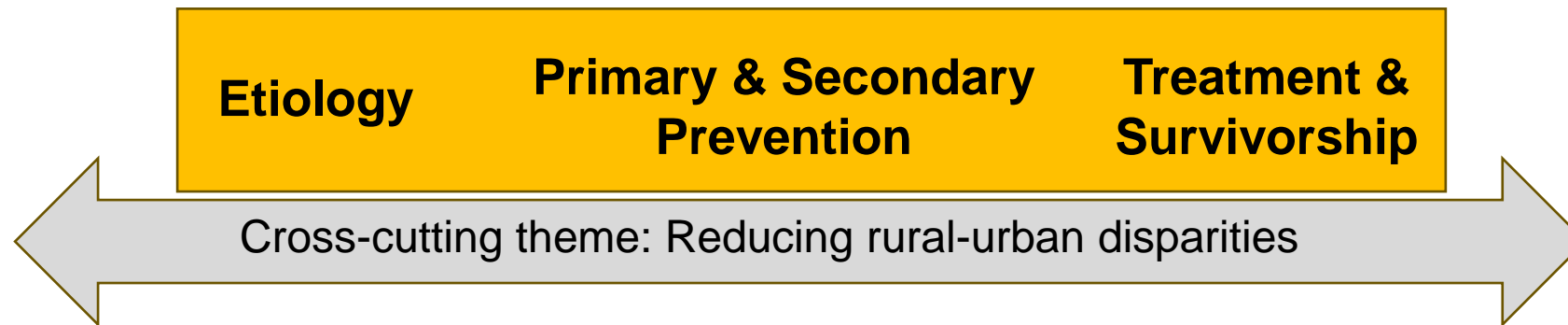


PROGRAM CO-LEADER

Mark Vander Weg, PhD

Updated Program Themes

- Conduct etiologic research on genetic, environmental, lifestyle, and contextual risk factors
- Develop, implement and disseminate novel approaches for primary and secondary prevention
- Improve the experience of patients during treatment and post-treatment survivorship



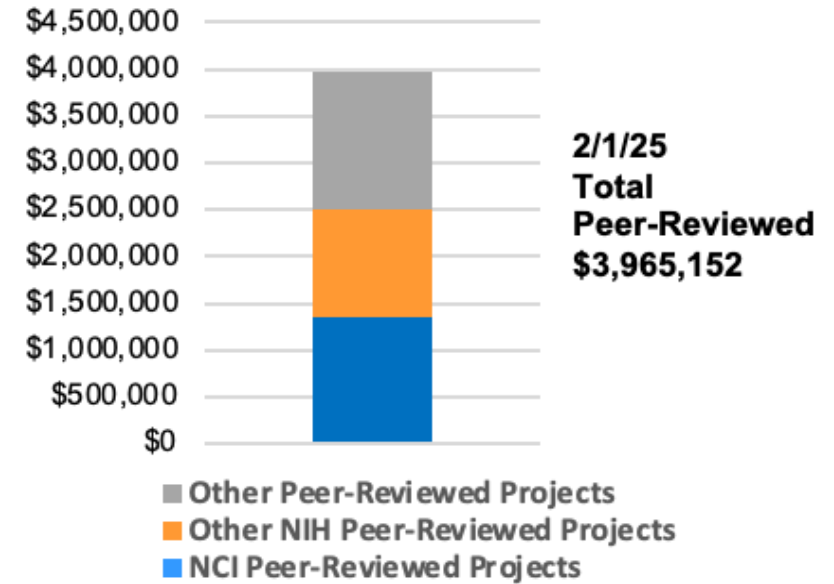
Program Snapshot

Program Overview

46 Full Members

14 Associate Members

PROGRAM DIRECT COSTS



CEPS Publications 7/23 – 6/24

Total Publications	109
High Impact	17 (16)
Intra-Programmatic	38 (35)
Inter-Programmatic	27 (25)
Multi-Institutional	79 (72)

Specific Funding Source	Direct Costs 2/1/25
NCI Peer-Review Projects	\$1,349,338
Other NIH Peer-Review Projects	\$1,159,751
Other Peer-Review Projects	\$1,456,063
Total Peer Reviewed	\$3,965,152
Total of Non-Peer Reviewed	\$1,547,732
Grand Total (All Projects)	\$5,577,265

Membership Updates

Program Overview

- 46 Full Members, 14 Associate Members

Featured New Members

Heather Schacht Reisinger, PhD

- Professor, General Internal Medicine
- Associate Director of Engagement, Integration and Implementation, Institute for Clinical and Translational Science
- Director, Implementation Science Center



David Cwiertny, PhD

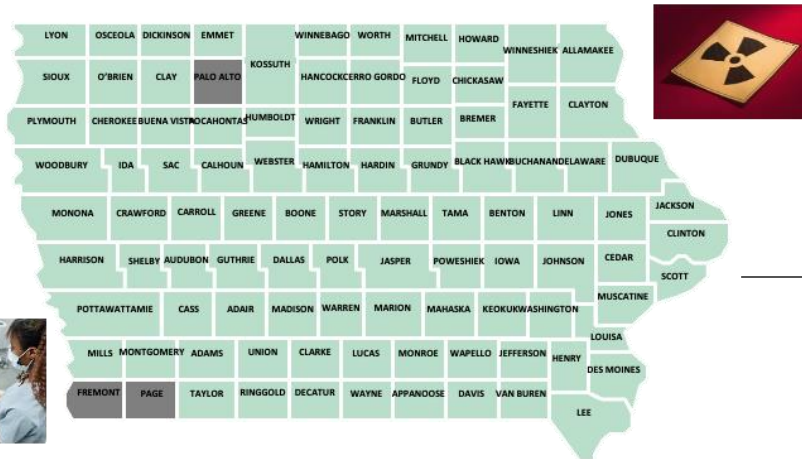
- Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Director, Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination
- Director, Environmental Policy Research Program, Public Policy Center

Recent Funding Highlights

- **Afifi:** Prevention Research Center for Rural Health – **CDC**
- **Askelson:** Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN) - **CDC**
- **Askelson:** Advancing Immunization Service Research (ARISe) Collaborating Center – **CDC**
- **Nash:** P30 Supplement - Regional differences in guideline-concordant cancer care and outcomes among American Indian Alaska Native people – **NCI**
- **O'Rorke:** Comparing the Effects of Different Treatment Approaches for Neuroendocrine Tumors on Patient-Reported Outcomes – The NET-PRO Study - **PCORI**

Highlight: Reducing the Impact of Lung Cancer Among Iowans Through Prevention and Early Detection

- Address high levels of lung cancer morbidity and mortality in Iowa
- Leverages existing relationships with:
 - I-CAN affiliates
 - Iowa Cancer Registry
 - Iowa Cancer Consortium
 - Iowa HHS
 - Iowa Radon Workgroup
 - Energy Association of Iowa Schools



- Enhanced patient care
- Relationship & infrastructure building
- Data to support R01 or P01 application focused on state-wide implementation

Study 1: Needs Assessments Related to Lung Cancer Screening

Study 2: Tobacco Product Point of Sale Retail Audits

Study 3: Radon Awareness, Testing, and Mitigation

CEPS Investigators: **Askelson, Charlton, Parker, Reisinger, Vander Weg**

Supported by the UI Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee (SPARC) Implementation P3 Fund

Highlight: Mitigating Rural Disparities in Cancer Care & Survivorship



Effectiveness and implementation of a health system intervention to improve quality of cancer care for rural, underserved patients (R01)

CEPS Investigators:
Lizarraga, Schroeder, Seaman, Gorzelitz, Fleege, Sherman, Charlton

3 Supplemental Awards:

- Exploration of Pathways for Exercise Referrals in Rural Cancer Community Settings (**Gorzelitz**)
- Supporting rural community hospitals' survivorship care through a cancer network model (**Seaman & Gorzelitz**)
- Adapting Survivorship Care to Rural Practice, Translating Rural Evidence into Policy - 99 Counties Project (**Nash & Zahnd**)

National Policy Impact: Working with the Commission on Cancer Rural Taskforce in developing a new Rural Accreditation Track & new rural-relevant quality measures

Preliminary data for P01 application: Rural cancer survivorship focus

CEPS Investigators: **Nash, Zahnd, Gorzelitz, Seaman, Reisinger, Charlton, Vander Weg, Lizarraga, Schroeder, Askelson**

- Semprini, **Lizarraga, Seaman, Gorzelitz, Schroeder, Charlton** (2024). Leveraging public health cancer surveillance capacity to develop and support a rural cancer network. *Learning Health Systems*.
- Evans, **Seaman, Schroeder, Lizarraga, Charlton** (2024). Rural comprehensive cancer care: Qualitative analysis of current challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Rural Health*.



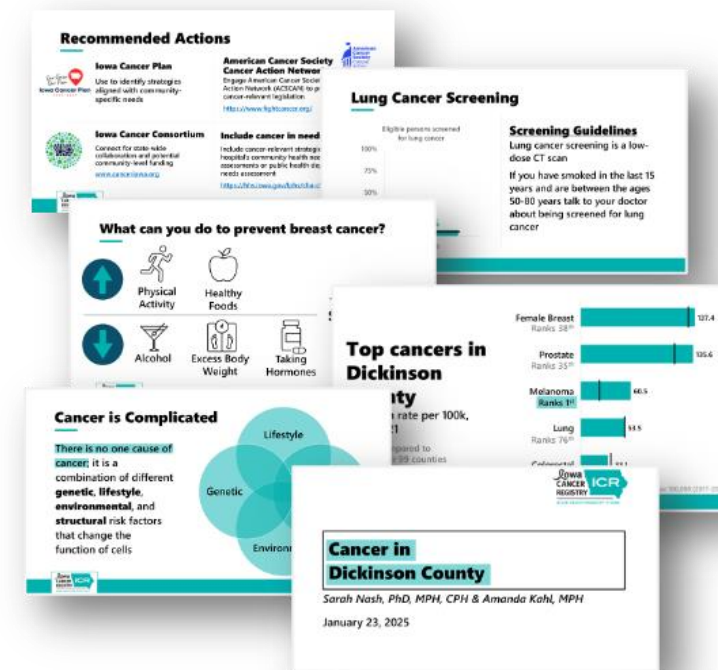
CEPS Research Addressing Possible Causes for the Increasing Cancer Incidence in Iowa

99 Counties Project:

- Rankings and trends in incidence
- Risk factors, prevention & screening behaviors
- Resources on cancer prevention & control
- Time for Q&A

Funded by NCI grant award: 5R01CA254628-04S2, and NCI funds provided to HCCC

CEPS Investigators: **Nash, Zahnd, Oleson, Askelson, Charlton**

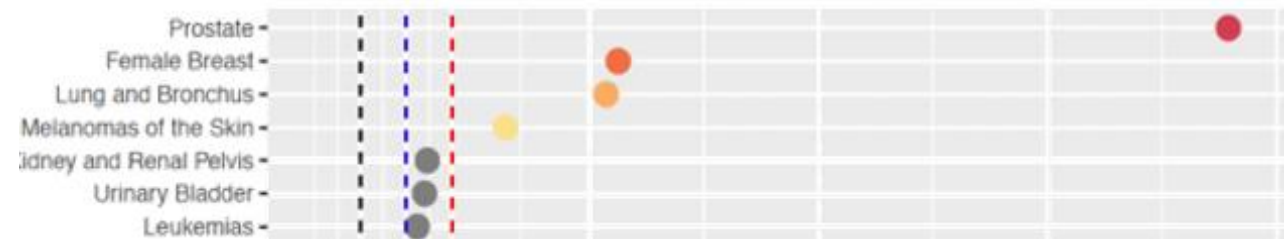


Investigation of High Cancer Incidence Rate

Conduct analyses of the contributions of specific cancer sites, geographic areas and county-level behavioral risk factors to Iowa's cancer incidence rate



Figure 1.1: Difference between US and Iowa Trends across years 2004–2021



State and Local Policy Impact

State of Cancer: Iowa is No. 2 in new cancer cases.
Lawmakers, doctors, cancer survivors seek answers

Share   



Updated: 11:53 AM CST Feb 26, 2025

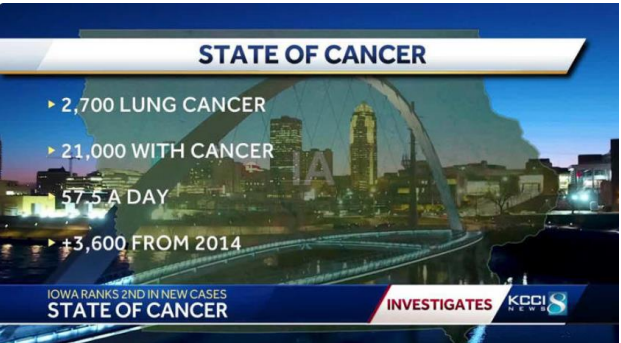
DES MOINES, Iowa —

Several bills still alive at the statehouse are tied to the state's high rate of new incidences of cancer.

The issue even came up in Gov. Kim Reynolds' Condition of the State address. "Every case of cancer is a tragedy," she said in January.

"And I'm concerned by the data showing that these tragedies disproportionately affect Iowans."

Reynolds called for \$1 million to start researching the reasons why cancer rates are rising in Iowa.



ALERT TOP STORY
IOWA

How Iowa lawmakers are aiming to address the state's rising cancer rates

Maya Marchel Hoff Feb 15, 2025 0

What are Iowa lawmakers doing about soaring cancer rates?

Some bills tackle issue; opponents say others 'dead wrong'

Maya Marchel Hoff, Gazette-Lee Des Moines Bureau

Feb. 17, 2025 5:30 am, Updated: Feb. 17, 2025 7:24 am



Why you can trust The Gazette



Iowa's Cancer Battle 2025 as seen on The Steele Report

Jan 9, 2025 0



LOCAL NEWS

WGAD 8

Gov. Reynolds proposes \$1 million cancer research team

—

If approved, the proposal will allocate \$1 million to establish a team dedicated to researching the factors that may play a role in cancer rates.

Trial Accrual and Use of Cores

	2021		2022		2023		2024	
Category	Trials	Accruals	Trials	Accruals	Trials	Accruals	Trials	Accruals
Interventional	7	83	7	115	9	145	9	134
Non-interventional	24	1722	21	1838	20	1891	25	2436
Total	31	1805	28	1953	29	2036	34	2570



Neuroendocrine Tumors – Patient Reported Outcomes (NET-PRO) **PI: O’Rorke** 



Instrument testing, refinement for exercise needs in lowan cancer survivors; **PI: Gorzelitz** 



Living WELL: A Web-Based Program for Ovarian Cancer Survivors; **PI: Lutgendorf**



Exercise in endometrial cancer survivors for cardiovascular adaptations; **PI: Gorzelitz** 



ACS-IRG award



Oberley award

CEPS Integration with COE

Program Liaison



Nicole Fleege, MD
Hematologist-Oncologist
Department of Internal
Medicine

Iowa Cancer Consortium Members FY 2025

# Joined	# Active	# Presented	# Elected to Board
31	17	1	3

Expert Review

- 5 researchers provided expert review for the Cancer in Iowa Report and/or Spotlight Series

Researcher Videos on COE Website

- Gorzelitz: Physical activity and cancer survivorship
- O'Rorke: Optimal sequencing of treatments for neuroendocrine tumors

Engaging with COE for Input/Data/Connections

- 1 researcher sought input on survivorship symposium
- 1 researcher sought connections to community members to discuss research
- 1 researcher sought input from CAB on exercise and survivorship
- 1 researcher applied for and received COE supplemental funding
- Program lead attends twice monthly COE team meetings

COE Collaborative Webinar Series

- 10 researchers participated

Iowa Cancer Registry 99 Counties Project

- 12 researchers participating

CEPS Integration with CRTEC

5 CEPS Members on the Emerging Leaders Council:

- **Gorzelitz** (Chair), Assistant Professor of **Health and Human Physiology**
- **Fleege**, Clinical Assistant Professor of **Internal Medicine, Hematology/Oncology**
- **Lillie**, Assistant Professor of **Communication Studies**
- **Seaman**, Assistant Professor of **Internal Medicine**
- **Zahnd**, Assistant Professor of **Health Management and Policy**

Several CEPS members highly engaged in CRTEC committees, including the 2024 HCCC Scientific Retreat Committee

- **Zahnd** served as Chair
- Retreat featured a CEPS-focused Keynote Speaker (**Kent Hoskins, Univ of Illinois**)

Several CEPS members engaged in mentoring:

- **Gorzelitz** (x 2) and **Kim** mentored summer undergrads
- **O'Rorke** mentored an ICARE postbac

Future Directions and Goals

- Further develop research focused on **environmental contributors** to cancer
- **Support early-stage investigators** in developing their cancer-focused research programs and facilitate opportunities for leadership development within HCCC
- Provide population-based research support and expertise to help **address community concerns and priorities** emerging from the 99 Counties Project
- **Strategic hiring** related to environmental risk factors and prevention or screening trials
- **Leverage the PCORnet data and other linkages** (ORIEN, EHR data, UK Biobank – All of Us, etc.) and partnerships for cancer-related research

CEPS Discussion