



Clinical Trials

Phase 1 Clinical Trials Bring Early Access to Patients

The clinical research team at FCS is conducting more than 60 Phase 1 clinical trials in partnership with Sarah Cannon Research Institute — at this very moment.

BY CHAY HUGHES

 **SARAH CANNON**
Research Institute
at Florida Cancer Specialists

 **FLORIDA CANCER**
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If “intrepid” isn’t the first adjective that comes to mind when you think of oncologists, then you haven’t met the trailblazers leading clinical research at Florida Cancer Specialists in action.

At Phase 1 Drug Development Units in Sarasota and the Orlando area, FCS doctors are playing a key role in the advancement of cancer research. In collaboration with Sarah Cannon Research Institute, they’re conducting 60-to-65 early Phase 1 clinical trials every day.

It’s an exciting period for developmental therapeutics in oncology.

In 2015, Dr. Judy Wang joined Dr.

Manish Patel at the Phase 1 Unit he directs in Sarasota. Together with their colleague Dr. Shekeab Jauhari in Lake Mary, these medical oncologists bring ground-breaking cancer research and treatments to their patients within the local, community-based care of FCS.

Phase 1: The Next Frontier

According to Dr. Wang, researchers are engineering new potential cancer treatments at an unprecedented rate. But in order to have a drug move along in the approval process, Phase 1 trials like the ones conducted at FCS are essential in

establishing baseline data, proper dosage and expectant side effects.

“Now, you’re seeing new drugs being approved at an accelerated pace — at times, it can feel like almost every week — which is a promising sign that governing regulatory agencies and pharmaceutical industries acknowledge the unmet needs for oncology patients,” said Dr. Wang. “In the developmental journey of bringing a drug from experimental trials to FDA-approved access for the general public, the first crucial step really lies with us in the initial Phase 1 studies.”



Sarah Cannon and FCS: A Network of Researchers

During his tenure at FCS, Dr. Patel has seen these studies grow in proportion with the public's demand for more treatment options.

"Doctors, patients and the industry as a whole want these drugs to come out faster, so we're starting to see these early phase trials become much larger," explained Dr. Patel. "The goal is trying to get these drugs approved as early and as safely as possible."

Giving FCS patients "first access" to life-saving medications means connecting with other experts in the field. In order to have a broader network, FCS collaborates with Sarah Cannon Research Institute, which acts as a hub to connect oncology practices nationwide conducting similar studies. Data collected from these separate sites will unify to push research forward.

According to Dr. Patel, FCS's large clinical trial menu allows patients access to local trials so that many no longer have to fly. Now, physicians from any of FCS's 89 locations are able to refer their metastatic patients to one of two Phase 1 Clinical Trial units.

During the first surge of COVID-19 cases in the U.S., many academic centers paused enrollment to clinical trials. Despite the challenge of coordinating these studies



Dr. Manish Patel

during a pandemic, clinical trials at FCS have continued, with additional protocols in place to optimize patient safety. Dr. Shekeab Jauhari explains, "We've stayed focused on the mission of providing excellent care. Our Phase 1 trials allow for earlier access to the newest cancer treatments in development. This has motivated us to continue our work without any interruptions."

The Patient's Perspective: What You Need to Know

Patients involved in clinical trials at FCS are monitored with extreme precision.



Dr. Shekeab Jauhari

Every ache, pang and downtick in lab tests is meticulously documented.

"Not only do our trials allow access to exciting therapies," says Dr. Wang, "but our trial patients find it rewarding to be part of the development process and establishing the management of these drugs for future patients."

Patients should know that their participation will help physicians and researchers like Dr. Patel, Dr. Wang and Dr. Jauhari push innovation in cancer research forward — and that they'll be well cared for every step of the way.



Dr. Judy Wang