

Message from the Founders and Executive Director



*Jon M. and Karen H. Huntsman
Founders and Principal Benefactors*



*Mary Beckerle, PhD
Executive Director*

In the United States, cancer is the leading cause of death for people under age 85. Overcoming the disease requires the most advanced research, data sharing on a broad community level with an international reach, the best care for every person with cancer, and effective prevention for people at risk.

Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) at the University of Utah is uniquely positioned to meet these requirements, and our dedicated faculty and staff continuously exceed them. This year's annual report, themed "Reaching for Excellence," highlights a few of the ways in which our organization succeeds.

For example, HCI is an international leader in genetics research. Our respected scientists include promising young investigators such as Alana Welm, PhD, who received accolades this year for her studies of breast cancer, and established laboratory veterans such as Mario Capecchi, PhD, who won the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his pioneering work in gene targeting technology, which gave researchers around the world a new tool to study human disease. Just this year, he and colleagues at HCI used this method to develop a mouse model which will aid them in studying synovial sarcoma.

In 2007, HCI continued to raise the bar in cancer care. Under the directorship of Bill Salter, MD, HCI's Department of Radiation Oncology has undergone rapid treatment advances in the past 12 months, with more developments underway. Our nurses, led by the newly appointed director Sue Childress, provide personalized, meaningful care and attention to each patient while developing and improving skills specific to the oncology field. To date, more than 30 HCI nurses have passed the rigorous examination that earns the oncology certified nurse (OCN) designation. These are just two areas in which our patients receive the most progressive care. It is no wonder that, for the second year in a row, University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics and HCI, its cancer care facility, were named among America's Best Hospitals by *U.S. News and World Report*.

While our reach far exceeds the boundaries of the Salt Lake Valley, the state of Utah, and even the Intermountain region, HCI faculty and staff also respect and take pride in our value to the community. Through prevention and outreach, we are building relationships with the local Hispanic community—Utah's largest minority population—to improve cancer education and access to care.

We are grateful to the state of Utah and many members of our community for their ongoing financial support. HCI reaches for, and achieves, excellence every day. We work to overcome cancer so fewer and fewer people have to lose those they love too soon. It's at the heart of all we do.