

Release Date: March 20, 2019

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Northside Hospital Cancer Institute expands its immunotherapy treatment for patients with certain cancers

ATLANTA— Northside Hospital Cancer Institute (NHCI) Immunotherapy Program now offers access to another chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell immunotherapy for treatment of adult acute lymphoid leukemia and certain types of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Kymriah® CAR T-cell therapy is made from a patient's own white blood cells, the prescription cancer treatment is used in patients up to 25 years old who have acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) that is either relapsing (went into remission, then came back) or is refractory (did not go into remission after receiving other leukemia treatments). It is also used in patients with non-Hodgkin lymphoma that has relapsed or is refractory after having at least two other kinds of treatment.

"We're targeting CAR T-cell therapy now to patients who have failed multiple rounds of conventional therapy," said Scott Solomon, medical director of Northside's Blood and Marrow Transplant (BMT) Matched Unrelated Donor Program and Stem Cell Processing Laboratory. "These patients historically have had very poor outcomes, very low chances of even brief remissions and certainly no chances of a cure prior to CAR T-cell therapy. And now many of them are alive months or years after therapy."

Immunotherapy works by taking immune cells, genetically modifying them to be better tumor-fighting immune cells, multiplying them to great numbers (tens of thousands), and then infusing them into the patient where they can find and attack cancer.

In 2018, NHCI became one of a select group of centers in the country to offer Yescarta™ CAR T-cell therapy for adult patients with certain types of non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

In addition to the two CAR T-cell therapies, NHCI participates in innovative clinical trials for CAR T-cell therapy in patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and multiple myeloma. Immunotherapy trials are available for patients with AML and other hematologic malignancies utilizing technologies such as checkpoint inhibitors, bispecific T-cell engaging antibodies and antibody-drug conjugates.

NHCI has been doing immunotherapy for decades in the form of allogeneic stem cell transplantation, in which a donor's bone marrow or blood is engineered and transplanted into a patient to cure aggressive blood cancers. Northside Hospital is nationally recognized for leukemia treatment and stem cell transplantation. For 10 consecutive years, the BMT Program at Northside has exceeded expected one-year survival outcomes for allogeneic transplants and is one of only two centers in the country (the only center in the Southeast) to do that.

Such transplants represented the first definitive proof of the human immune system's capacity to cure cancer. Now, through studying CAR T-cells, cancer researchers are developing new ways to strengthen and empower a patient's own immune system.

For more information about the Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Immunotherapy Program, visit northside.com/immunotherapy.

About Northside Hospital

The Northside Hospital health care system is one of Georgia's leading health care providers with more than 240 locations across the state, including three acute care, state-of-the-art hospitals in Atlanta, Cherokee County and Forsyth County. Northside Hospital leads the U.S. in newborn deliveries and is among the state's top providers of cancer care and surgical services. Northside has 3,000 physicians and 16,000 employees who serve more than 3 million patient visits annually across a full range of medical services.

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