

National Cancer Institute Initiatives to Understand and Treat Rare Cancers

Recognizing the challenges of studying rare cancers and developing treatment against them, NCI is leading several initiatives to facilitate mechanistic understanding of rare cancers, as well as to develop approaches that expedite development and testing of new treatments against these diseases. Some of these initiatives are listed below:



INTERNATIONAL RARE CANCER INITIATIVE (IRCI)

Established in 2011 by NCI, the UK National Institute for Health Research, Cancer Research UK, and the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer, later joined by the French National Cancer Institute, the Canadian Clinical Trials Group, the Japan Clinical Oncology Group, and the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia—is aimed at conducting practice-changing clinical trials for patients with rare cancers.

NCI RARE TUMOR INITIATIVE

Launched in 2013—is aimed at fostering closer collaborations between basic and clinical scientists, patient advocacy groups, and industry partners to facilitate the development of new approaches to treating patients with rare cancers.

RARE TUMOR PATIENT ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

Initiated in 2016 by the NCI Center for Cancer Research as part of the Cancer Moonshot—is aimed at studying selected rare pediatric and adult tumors and developing a network of clinical trials. Finding treatments for childhood, teen, and young adult rare solid tumors is the focus of the My Pediatric and Adult Rare Tumor (MyPART) network, while the NCI Comprehensive Oncology Network Evaluating Rare CNS Tumors (NCI-CONNECT) is studying 12 rare central nervous system cancers in adults.