



# spotlight on health

## New Cancer Medicines Offer A Prescription For Hope

(NAPS)—There's hopeful news for those fighting cancer. A record number of medicines (887) to help fight a variety of cancers are now in clinical trials or awaiting Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for patient use.

According to a recent report from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), that's well over double the number in the pipeline just six years ago, when there were fewer than 400 medicines in development for cancer.

One promising development, said Garry Neil, M.D., corporate vice president of science and technology at Johnson & Johnson, is the increased understanding about the many ways a tumor can protect and feed itself by co-opting the body's own mechanisms.

Other new developments in cancer research include a better understanding of the key role that cancer stem cells play in resistance to chemotherapy, and the interplay between cancer cells and the supporting tissue that surrounds them, said Scott Waldman, M.D., Ph.D., of the Kimmel Cancer Center. Biomarkers, Waldman added, are increasing researchers' ability to predict and to understand the body's response to new therapies.

Dr. Waldman was recognized this year by the PhRMA Foundation for his breakthrough work on colorectal cancer. He and Dr. Neil also pointed to advanced gene sequencing that is revealing the genetic basis of cancer and leading to opportunities for personalized medicine.

Combination therapies, which were so successful in fighting



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HIV/AIDS, also represent an important step in cancer treatment, said Dr. Neil. Regulatory agencies, he added, are recognizing the need to simplify the testing of multiple medicines in development in order to realize this potential breakthrough.

“Unprecedented insights into how cancer cells develop, grow and spread are providing new targets and new ways of attacking the disease,” said John J. Castellani, PhRMA’s president and CEO. “Rapidly advancing technologies and the commitment of researchers to following new clues are providing hope.”

Asked where we now stand in the battle against cancer, Dr. Neil said, “We are hopefully moving to the beginning of the end for many cancers.”

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America represents the country's leading pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies. To learn more, visit [www.PhrMA.org](http://www.PhrMA.org).