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Targeting the Microbiome and Other Factors to Promote Health and End Cancer

Jen Wargo's career commitment has always been to advance the understanding and treatment of disease through science. After completing her medical degree, she entered surgical residency training at the Massachusetts General Hospital where she became interested in the biology and treatment of cancer. During her training, she completed two fellowships in surgical oncology with a focus on cancer immunotherapy.

She was recruited to MGH in 2008 to join the faculty in the Division of Surgical Oncology and established a translational research laboratory focusing on better understanding response and resistance to treatment for melanoma, pancreatic cancer, and other cancers. During that time, her laboratory demonstrated that treatment with molecularly targeted therapy could sensitize tumor cells to treatment with immunotherapy, providing the rationale for combined targeted therapy and immunotherapy combinations. She also began studies on the tumor microbiome in pancreatic and other cancers while at Harvard.

Jen was recruited to the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in 2013 to help lead the Melanoma Moonshot efforts - and also continued important translational research work on targeted therapy, immunotherapy, and the impact of the gut and tumor microbiome in cancer. Jen is currently a Professor of Surgical Oncology and Genomic Medicine, and the leader of the Platform for Innovative Microbiome and Translational Research (PRIME-TR) at MD Anderson. Importantly, Jen is deeply invested in working with investigators across the institution and across the world to find better ways to treat, intercept, and ultimately prevent cancer.