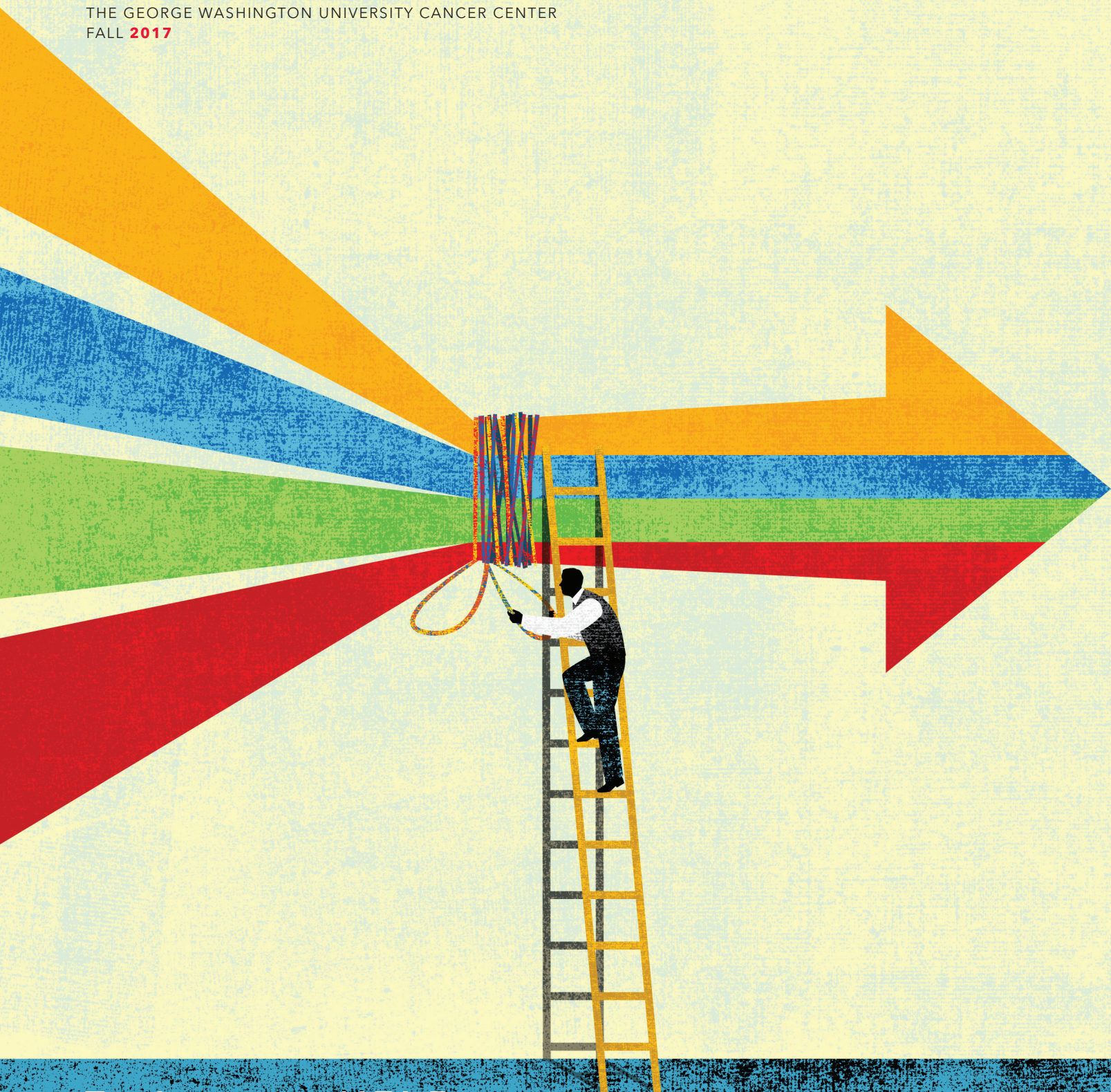


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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY CANCER CENTER  
FALL 2017



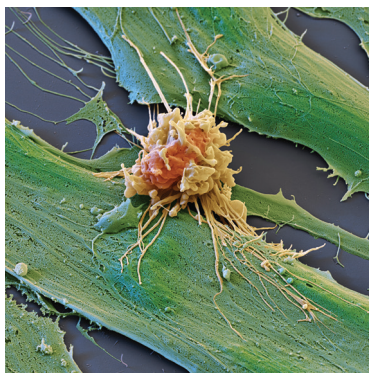
Pathway to NCI Designation





## ALIGNING ON LYMPHOMA CARE

**6** Kieron Dunleavy, MD, is the inaugural leader of the GW Cancer Center's lymphoma team. The team will bring experts together from different specialties to grow and advance GW's lymphoma care and research offerings.



## A CONFLUENCE OF SCIENCE

**14** Microbial oncology is the study of how microbes, such as viruses, bacteria, or parasites, can be manipulated to fight cancer. Some microbes can be modified to produce biological agents to potentially fight the disease.



## A POODLE AMONG PATIENTS

**22** GW's pet therapy program was started in 2016 by Jamie Glidewell, a former social work intern at the GW Medical Faculty Associates. James the Poodle (above) is one of the therapy dogs who visits patients at the GW Cancer Center.

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**GW CANCER CENTER** incorporates all of the existing cancer-related activities at the George Washington University (GW), GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the GW Medical Faculty Associates, the GW Hospital, and Milken Institute School of Public Health at GW, and serves as a platform to refocus and re-energize the university's efforts in cancer research and patient care. For more information about GW Cancer Center visit [gwcancercenter.com](http://gwcancercenter.com)

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# A Poodle Among Patients

BY CAROLINE TRENT-GURBUZ

“He loves people, and he’s calm.  
He’s the perfect therapy dog.”

AMY KAPLAN



**EVERY WEDNESDAY, JAMES THE POODLE** – occasionally sporting thematic wear, be it a cowboy hat, colorful bandana, or pumpkin costume – and his owner, Sandra Johnson, visit the Infusion Center at the George Washington University (GW) Cancer Center. James' presence is met with pats and rhetorical queries of "who's a good boy?" by patients and staff members alike.

On this particular Wednesday, James is warmly greeted by Jennifer Bires, LICSW, a former clinical social worker at the GW Cancer Center, before he clicks through the door to the patients receiving doses of chemotherapy.

The pet therapy program, Bires says, was started by Jamie Glidewell, a social work intern at the GW Medical Faculty Associates, a year ago. "She worked in hospice before

she came here and started a pet therapy program there. She saw how beneficial it was," Bires explains. "[All of the patients] look forward to seeing James. It's a really great break in their long time being here; it's a reprieve from what's going on."

For patient Amy Kaplan, who has her own dog, 13-year-old Lulu, seeing James "is a highlight, that's for sure."

"He loves people, and he's calm," she says, reaching down from her reclined chair to rub James' back. "He's the perfect therapy dog."

James is newly certified, not quite a year into his new role. The idea to transition the almost 7-year-old poodle from pet to therapy dog sparked after Johnson, a native of Orlando, Florida, read coverage of the June 2016 nightclub shooting in her hometown.

"This group was sending therapy dogs to Florida to help with the grieving of all those families, and something about the article caught my attention," she recalls. "I decided to look up the therapy dog group [Therapy Dogs International]. I thought, 'You know what, this is perfect timing; this is meant to be. I'm going to sign him up and get registered.'"

After a temperament evaluation, James was registered, and Johnson scouted out potential clinics. The GW Cancer Center was the first place she called, and the response was immediate. "We set it up to start coming every Wednesday," she says. "James really likes it."

Although he isn't the only therapy dog who visits patients at the GW Cancer Center, James is the most regular one. "There are days you can tell people are really happy to see him," Johnson says. "He's not a big kisser; he

doesn't really give out a lot of them. But sometimes he's really kissing somebody and giving them lots of love, and you can tell that he's really helped some people, taken their mind off things."

Patient Taylor Ferrell agrees that James always makes him feel better. "You could bring him every day. That would make me happy."



#### **PUPPY LOVE**

GW's pet therapy program was started a year ago by Jamie Glidewell, a former social work intern at the GW Medical Faculty Associates. Of the therapy dogs who visit patients at the GW Cancer Center, James the Poodle, pictured here, is the most regular one.

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