

Speakers

2022 Chordoma Community Conference at NYU Langone Health

Nidhi Agrawal, MD

Dr. Agrawal is a Clinical Assistant Professor of endocrinology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Director of Pituitary Diseases at NYU Langone Health. She specializes in treating endocrine system disorders often experienced by clival chordoma survivors, such as adrenal insufficiency, hypo/hyperthyroidism, and pituitary disorders.

Sharon Berlan

Sharon is a Manhattan local and an avid birder. She was diagnosed with skull base chordoma in 2004 and has been connected to the Chordoma Foundation since its founding. She has been a Chordoma Foundation Peer Guide for over 10 years, has helped organize numerous community conferences, and is an admin for the very active Chordoma Support and Survivors group on Facebook.

Benjamin Brucker, MD

Dr. Brucker is an Associate Professor at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Program. He specializes in neuro-urology, urogynecology, and surgery, and helps patients manage bladder problems, incontinence, urinary tract infections, pelvic organ prolapse, and other conditions. He uses a combination of traditional approaches and advanced, minimally invasive techniques to improve safety, speed of recovery, and outcomes for his patients.

Gregory Cote, MD, PhD

Dr. Cote is a medical oncologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center in the Henri and Belinda Termeer Center for Targeted Therapies (Phase I), the Center for Sarcoma and Connective Tissue Oncology, and the Stephan L. Harris Center for Chordoma. His primary research interest is in developing novel agents for sarcomas through early phase clinical trials and translational laboratory collaborations.

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Nicola Fabbri, MD

Dr. Fabbri is a Professor at Weill College of Medicine of Cornell University and an orthopedic surgeon at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He has 20 years of experience treating musculoskeletal cancers, including osteosarcoma, Ewing Sarcoma, chondrosarcoma, soft tissue sarcomas, giant-cell tumor, chordoma, adamantinoma, osteofibrous dysplasia, angiosarcoma, and other vascular tumors.

Dan Freed, PhD

Dr. Freed is Head of Translational Research at the Chordoma Foundation. He has over 15 years of experience in cancer biology, translational research, and preclinical drug development spanning the academic and biopharmaceutical arenas, with expertise in understanding how the internal 'wiring' of cells changes during tumor development and progression. At the Foundation, Dan works to identify novel therapeutic targets in chordoma that can provide rationale for new clinical trials. Throughout his career thus far, Dan has been a strong advocate of approaching biomedical questions using a variety of approaches at different resolutions — and hopes this philosophy will provide a comprehensive “molecules-to-patients” perspective of chordoma that will lead to new therapeutic options for those afflicted by this rare disease.

John Golfinos, MD

Dr. Golfinos is the Joseph Ransohoff Professor of Neurosurgery at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, Co-Director of the Brain Tumor Center at Perlmutter Cancer Center, and Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at NYU Langone Health. A main focus of his career has been spent researching neurofibromatosis type 2, a genetic disease that causes complex tumors to grow in the brain and spinal cord.

Susan Hall

Susan is a sacral chordoma survivor of nearly six years and has been a Chordoma Foundation Peer Guide since 2020. Susan is a training consultant and business performance coach, as well as an animal lover, globe-trotter, artist, fitness enthusiast, and

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a city girl who hugs trees. She recently wrote her first book, *Decide Happy: Less Stress. More Joy. A Practical Guide.*

Douglas Kondziolka, MD

Dr. Kondziolka is the Gray Family Professor of Neurosurgery at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Director of the Gamma Knife Program at NYU Langone Health. He treats patients who have neurological conditions, such as metastatic brain tumors, acoustic neuroma (also known as vestibular schwannoma), meningioma, primary brain tumors, brain vascular malformations, movement and behavioral disorders, and trigeminal neuralgia. His current laboratory and clinical research into stereotactic radiosurgery spans many conditions, including benign and malignant tumors, vascular malformations, and functional disorders.

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Ilya Laufer, MD

Dr. Laufer is a faculty member at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Director of the Spine Tumor Program of the Brain and Spine Tumor Center at Perlmutter Cancer Center. He specializes in minimally invasive surgery and treats patients with a wide range of spinal neoplasms or abnormal tissue growths, including metastatic tumors, rare primary bone tumors, and tumors of the nerves and spinal cord.

Cinthe Pillai, MD

Dr. Pillai is an Associate Professor of Neurology and Ophthalmology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and a clinical neuro-ophthalmologist at NYU Langone Health. She has a longstanding background in vision research that started in the laboratory of Torsten N. Wiesel, Nobel Laureate, and more recently in head injury at the NYU Concussion Center. Her main passion is interacting with patients and families, and offering care on an individualized basis.

Lisa Ruppert, MD

Dr. Ruppert is a physician of physical medicine and rehabilitation and Associate Director of the Cancer Rehabilitation Medicine Fellowship Program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She specializes in evaluating and caring for patients with neurological impairments secondary to primary and metastatic tumors of the spine, spinal cord, and brain, as well as neurological impairments that can develop as a result of cancer treatment. These impairments can include weakness, sensory deficits, unstable balance, autonomic dysfunction, pain, bowel and bladder dysfunction, spasticity, sexual dysfunction, difficulty swallowing, and abnormal gait.

Daniel Sciubba, MD

Dr. Sciubba serves as the senior vice president of neurosurgery at Northwell Health, chair of neurosurgery at North Shore University Hospital and Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Co-Director of the Institute for Neurology and Neurosurgery at Northwell Health and Chair

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of Neurosciences at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. He specializes in spine surgery, with special emphasis on spine tumors and spinal deformity. He is recognized for his work in complex en bloc surgery with an approach that is as minimally invasive as possible but as far-reaching as necessary.

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Chandra Sen, MD

Dr. Sen is the Bergman Family Professor of Skull Base Surgery at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Director of the Benign Brain Tumor and Cranial Nerve Disorders Program at NYU Langone Health. He is a pioneer in the field of skull base surgery and his research is directly linked to improving treatment outcomes for patients. His research focuses on the anatomy of the skull base to understand how skull base tumors behave and affect specific areas and how to approach them in surgery. He has published several papers and book chapters on skull base and cervical spine chordomas, and frequently lectures on chordoma at international conferences.

Matija Snuderl, MD

Dr. Snuderl is an Associate Professor at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Director of Molecular Pathology at NYU Langone Health. As a neuropathologist, he diagnoses brain tumors and other brain diseases in children and adults. As director of molecular pathology, he oversees molecular and genomic profiling, a laboratory method that allows doctors to accurately diagnose all types of brain tumors.

Josh Sommer

Josh was diagnosed with a skull base chordoma in 2006. Unwilling to accept the limited treatment options available to chordoma patients, he joined the lab of Dr. Michael Kelley at Duke University, where he spent the next two years studying chordoma. There he experienced the very practical challenges faced by virtually all would-be chordoma researchers — insufficient funding; scarcity of tissue, cell lines and animal models needed for experiments; and isolation from others studying the disease. To solve these problems and proactively advance the search for a cure, Josh co-founded the Chordoma Foundation in 2007. Under his leadership, the Foundation has united and expanded the chordoma research community and vastly accelerated the pace of chordoma research. As Executive Director, Josh works with the Foundation's research partners, advisors, and supporters to design, execute, and fund research initiatives focused on developing new treatments for chordoma.

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Josh Yamada, MD

Dr. Yamada is a radiation oncologist at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Co-Chief of the Multidisciplinary Spine Tumor Services. He has expertise in treating primary brain tumors, metastatic brain tumors, and spine tumors, including chordoma, with brachytherapy (radiation placed inside of tumors) and image-guided radiation (IGRT). His clinical research is focused on using image-guided technologies to treat tumors in all sites of the body, including adult brain and spine tumors, as well as liver tumors.