

## **Written Testimony for the Record**

### **House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Health**

#### **Field Hearing: Modernized Health Care in Practice: Empowering Americans to Live Healthier Lives**

**Witness:** Patrick Hwu, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, Moffitt Cancer Center

**Hearing Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

**Location:** Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine – Bradenton (LECOM Bradenton)

**Submitted to:** Chairman Vern Buchanan, Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett, Chairman Jason Smith, Ranking Member Richard Neal and Members of the Subcommittee on Health

#### **Introduction**

Chairman Buchanan, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Doggett, Ranking Member Neal, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record. I am Patrick Hwu, M.D., President and CEO of Moffitt Cancer Center, Florida's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Moffitt's mission is to contribute to the prevention and cure of cancer and our work is focused on helping people live longer and healthier lives.

I currently serve as President and CEO of Moffitt Cancer Center, and I am a tumor immunologist focused on translating discovery into better outcomes for patients. Early in my career at the National Cancer Institute, I helped demonstrate that human T cells could be genetically engineered to recognize and destroy cancer, foundational work that helped launch CAR T cell therapy. Before joining Moffitt, I spent 17 years at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in senior leadership roles and continued advancing immunotherapy and cellular therapy research that informs clinical care today

#### **Chronic Disease and Cancer Prevention**

Cancer is a chronic disease that often develops over years, which creates a clear policy opportunity: prevent cancer when possible, detect it earlier when it is most treatable, and reduce modifiable risk factors that increase incidence and worsen outcomes. When prevention and early detection work well, the system avoids downstream costs tied to late-stage disease and complex interventions, and patients have better outcomes.

Moffitt's Screening and Prevention Program specializes in risk assessment, monitoring, and early detection for multiple cancers. Our approach combines screening, surveillance, counseling, and diagnostic services to help patients act earlier, particularly when they have elevated risk due to family history, exposure, or age. This includes use of contemporary imaging and genetic risk assessment to support proactive decision making.

Prevention is also inseparable from cancer education and community engagement. Research and outreach efforts that help people understand cancer risk, screening guidelines, and early warning signs can raise screening adherence and reduce delays between an abnormal finding and a diagnostic workup. It is also critical that health plan design makes evidence based cancer screening and follow up care broadly available with minimal friction, and while many insurers have made real progress by covering preventive services and expanding access to screening, there is still a clear need to go further by removing administrative barriers such as prior authorization that delay or discourage patients from getting screened. These steps are especially important in underserved settings where barriers to care make late-stage presentations more common.

Moffitt also extends cancer prevention and early detection beyond our campuses through mobile screening programs that bring services directly into communities, including rural areas where access barriers are often highest. Our Mobile Lung Screening Unit uses a low dose CT scanner and travels to partner sites across Florida so eligible individuals can receive screening closer to home. By reducing the need for long travel and making screening available in familiar community settings, the mobile unit can help identify suspicious findings earlier and connect patients quickly to appropriate follow up care, which is a key pathway to preventing late-stage disease.

In addition, Moffitt's Mole Patrol program brings free skin cancer screenings and education to venues around Florida and beyond through a dedicated mobile unit. This approach helps reach people who may not otherwise see a dermatologist, which is especially important in rural communities where specialty care can be limited. When clinicians identify a concerning lesion, participants leave with clear follow up recommendations for their primary care clinician or dermatologist, and they also receive prevention education that reinforces sun safety and early warning signs, supporting prevention through earlier detection and more timely intervention.

### **Healthy Lifestyles, Nutrition, and Cancer Prevention**

Healthy living affects cancer risk and also affects outcomes after a cancer diagnosis. Lifestyle behaviors influence inflammation, metabolism, immune function, and

treatment tolerance, which is why prevention and survivorship increasingly require a whole-person approach rather than a narrow focus on procedures alone. We appreciate the growing bipartisan focus on nutrition, lifestyle, and exposure to toxins like microplastics and look forward to working with Congress and the Administration how to address these issues.

From a health system perspective, lifestyle support is most effective when it is paired with clear benefit design and practical access. Patients are more likely to adopt lifestyle changes when they can receive nutrition counseling, physical activity guidance, and behavioral support early, and when care teams can reinforce these steps over time. At Moffitt, we are working to integrate lifestyle modifications and counseling into cancer treatment. It is imperative that patients receive this information from clinical staff such as oncologists so that they can experience lifestyle changes as an inseparable part of their treatment. Too often, patients can feel that their cancer treatment is isolated from other parts of their lives. By educating both clinicians and patients, we can increase medication adherence, reduce inflammation and unwanted immune responses, and improve overall outcomes.

Moffitt created the Population Engagement and Research Laboratory (PEARL) to advance precision cancer interception, an emerging paradigm that seeks to combat cancer earlier through personalized prevention, screening, and intervention strategies that reflect an individual's biological and behavioral characteristics. PEARL was designed to make this research practical by co-locating participant-facing services so that people do not have to travel across multiple sites to take part in prevention research. PEARL includes a research kitchen and dining area that supports controlled feeding studies and nutrition intervention research. It also includes dedicated space for exercise and body composition assessment so research teams can measure how nutrition and physical activity influence biomarkers and health outcomes over time. This infrastructure supports rigorous studies of energy balance, weight management, and metabolism across the cancer continuum.

The clinical relevance is straightforward. Diet and nutrition can be one of the most actionable areas for patients and families because it is part of daily life. Moffitt researchers have highlighted the growing evidence base that links diet to cancer prevention and to quality of life during treatment and survivorship, and PEARL is designed to generate stronger evidence that can be translated into real clinical guidance.

PEARL also supports research that combines multiple behavioral interventions rather than studying them in isolation. That matters because people rarely change one behavior at a time in real life, and the highest-yield prevention strategies often involve

coordinated steps that improve diet, increase physical activity, and support healthy weight. Moffitt is proud to be pioneering this work and providing a cutting edge resource for patients in South Florida.

### **Innovative Technology for Health and Wellness**

Innovation can accelerate prevention and improve access to high-quality care, especially for patients who live far from academic or research centers. Digital tools can support education, screening adherence, remote monitoring, and clinician decision support, and they can help reduce unwarranted variation in care that arises when evidence changes faster than most teams can track.

Moffitt is modernizing cancer diagnosis and research through our innovative digital pathology program, which converts traditional glass slides into high resolution digital images that can be securely viewed, shared, and analyzed. This enables faster collaboration among subspecialty pathologists, supports more consistent review, and helps reduce delays when patients need timely answers.

We have entered multi-year collaborations to deploy enterprise digital pathology platforms across our pathology programs, strengthening slide management, viewing, and collaboration while creating a foundation for responsible use of advanced analytics in clinical care and research. At scale, digital pathology helps us integrate pathology data with imaging and clinical insights to support precision medicine, expand access to expert review, and improve efficiency for patients and care teams across Florida. Our digital pathology program is a great example of the type of innovation in patient care that is happening here in the Tampa area.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Based on the themes above, there are practical policy steps that can help encourage healthier lives and reduce chronic disease burden. These recommendations emphasize prevention, lifestyle support, and responsible innovation that improves access.

1. Strengthen coverage and plan design for prevention and screening, including coverage that supports follow-up diagnostics and navigation after an abnormal result so patients can complete the full pathway from screening to diagnosis
2. Support evidence generation and implementation for nutrition and physical activity interventions that reduce risk and improve outcomes, including research infrastructure that produces actionable, reproducible findings that can be adopted broadly.
3. Encourage adoption of validated digital tools that improve access to care

### **Conclusion**

Chronic disease prevention, healthy living, and responsible innovation are measurable opportunities to improve outcomes and reduce long-term costs. Moffitt appreciates the opportunity to testify before the committee, and we stand ready to serve as a resource on these important issues.