

The OHC Team of Blood and Marrow Transplant Specialists, Left to Right:

Edward Faber, Jr., DO, MS

James H. Essell, MD

Miguel A. Islas-Ohlmayer, MD

INFUSING HOPE

Myth: When choosing where to beat your cancer, you can select a facility with preeminent physicians employing groundbreaking treatments or a practice that embraces each case personally and treats patients like family.

Myth: You can't have both.

Myth: And if you live in Greater Cincinnati, prepare to travel.

These myths are being dispelled every day at OHC.

Written by Doug Geyer • Photography by Tracy Doyle

For more than 30 years, OHC's team of specialists, nurses, counselors, and advisors have worked tirelessly to achieve great outcomes. Precise tools are personalized for every patient and coupled with compassionate, comprehensive care. There is a reason they are in a rarified company of cancer centers nationally. Actually, there are many reasons.

OHC loves dispelling the misconception that you have to leave the tri-state for the best cancer care.

"People think you have to go to the Mayo Clinic, Sloan Kettering, or Johns Hopkins. You don't. That kind of care is right here. You will not find a more committed and capable staff," said James H. Essell, MD, medical oncologist, hematologist and bone marrow transplant specialist with OHC.

Dr. Essell is one member of that staff, and he embodies the collective spirit and determination which defines all of OHC. He takes the battle against cancer personally.

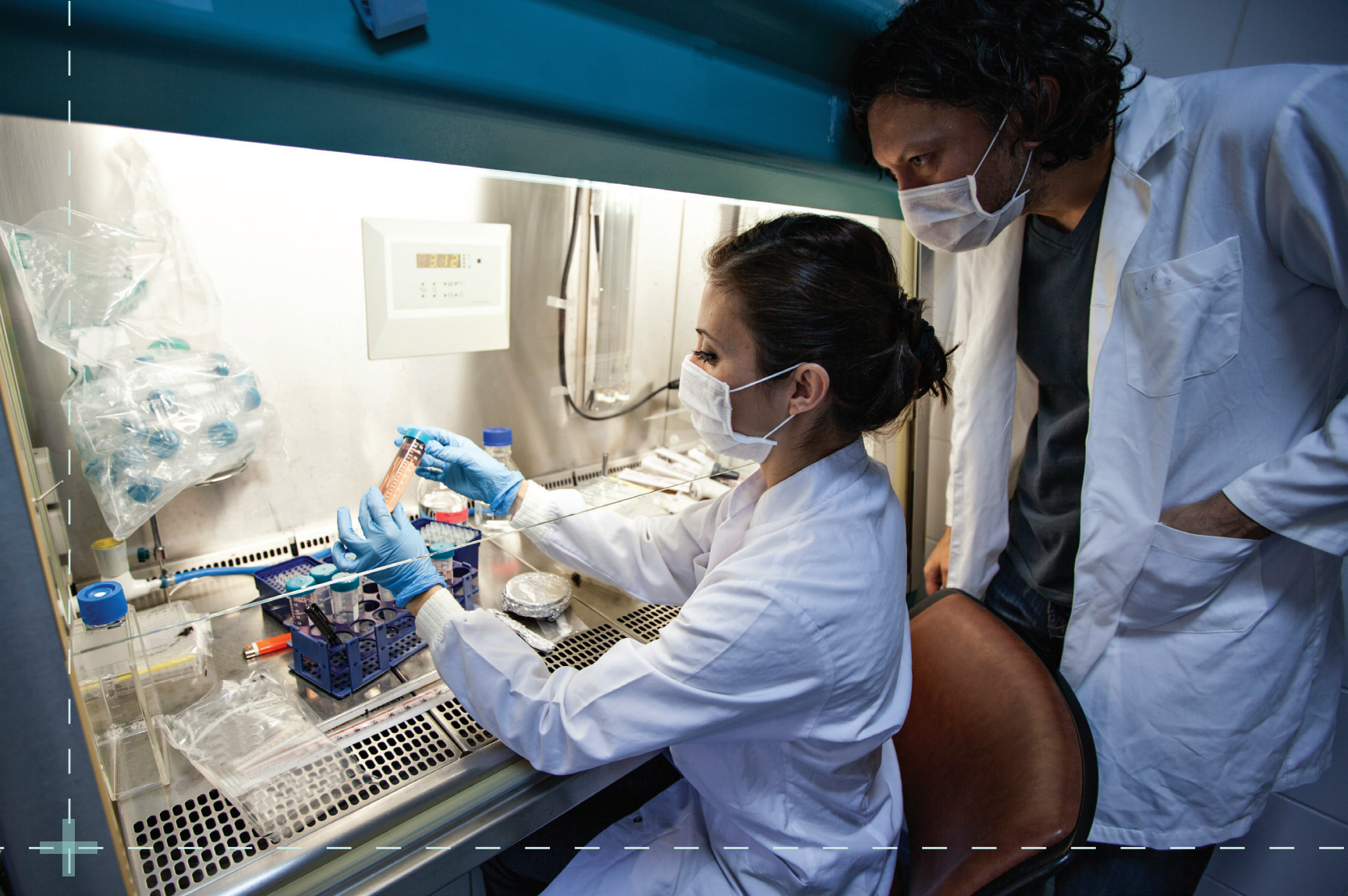
"I'm from the Cincinnati area, a west side kid. Growing up, virtually everyone from my family had or died from cancer. Later on,

I learned that we carry the BRCA1 cancer gene. This is what led me to a career in medicine. I started off with a pharmacy degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1981 and then went straight into medical school, graduating in 1985."

Essell enlisted in the Air Force where he received nine more years of training through residency and fellowship programs. Even at this early stage in his career, he chose San Antonio specifically so that he could work in a facility which specialized in stem cell transplants for cancer. He came back to Cincinnati in 1994 to join OHC.

The same cutting-edge mindset that drew Essell to Texas is what he loves about OHC. The numerous affiliations with nationally recognized institutes and initiatives provide an extensive and ever-evolving network of relationships and an ever-growing body of knowledge. Their clinical trials program has participated in more than 80 percent of the studies which led to the newest and most effective drugs through the years. Doing the best with what is offered today while always keeping an eye on the horizon of tomorrow is what makes OHC such a beacon of promise for cancer patients.





Essell is particularly excited about chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy (CAR-T) – a treatment with frontier-pushing possibilities. After removing and modifying a patient’s own T cells to recognize and attack their specific type of cancer, the T cells are injected back to fight as an ongoing and “living” drug.

“Growing up, virtually everyone from my family had or died from cancer. Later on, I learned that we carry the BRCA1 cancer gene. This is what led me to a career in medicine.” – James Essell, M.D.

“There are two critical messages people in Greater Cincinnati should know about CAR-T. First, this emerging treatment is incredibly promising, like nothing before. CAR-T may be the biggest breakthrough since the introduction of chemotherapy. Second, this treatment is available right here. The only way a facility can qualify to offer it is to have a highly skilled team of cancer doctors and a full-

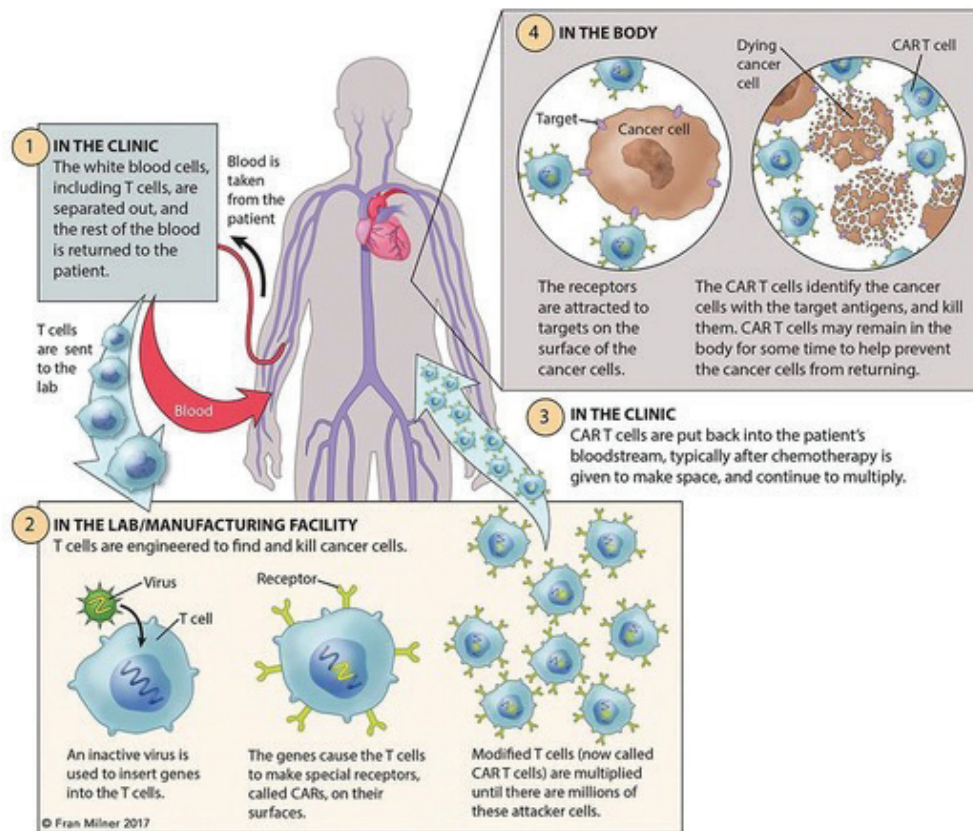
service blood cancer center that is accredited by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy,” Essell confirmed.

The team at OHC and the Blood Cancer Center at The Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health have earned that special recognition. In fact, they were the first adult FACT-accredited blood and bone marrow transplant center in the tri-state.

“The approach has been to use chemotherapy and radiation to kill the cancer and we’ve seen great success with that approach. Now we have something that may be even better because we are able to re-train our body’s own immune system cells to recognize mutated cancer cells and destroy them. And not just once, but in an ongoing state as these are living dividing cancer fighting cells. It definitely has the opportunity to be a game-changer.”

But the team at OHC isn’t so focused on the science that they lose sight of their patients. With a diverse and dedicated crew of highly trained and experienced medical professionals, financial navigators and therapists, treating the whole person is elevated to a whole new level.

Patients don’t just battle their cancer during the week from nine-to-five. Cancer doesn’t take time off for Christmas or Thanksgiving. That’s why the team at OHC is available to see whoever is in need



seven-days-a-week, at any hour – even on holidays. That kind of commitment and accessibility is unique. And because OHC is the only independent community cancer center in Cincinnati, they treat and send patients to the specialists and hospitals of their choice. Anyone facing the life-altering reality of cancer shouldn't be limited to seeing only certain doctors and specialists that just happen to be in one system or another. OHC's independence translates into greater freedom for those who need it most. When combined with the strategic design of their facilities and an unwavering and unparalleled level of access, it becomes evident why their outcomes are so good.

“We have a unique setting here that nobody else has. Our transplant center and our outpatient center are within feet of each other. If one of our patients has a problem, I can walk out of the clinic and be in their room in seconds. Not hours. We also have our own intensive care unit, which is completely unique. Anywhere else, when a cancer patient gets sick, they have to leave the expertise of the cancer center and the highly-trained nurses to go to the general ICU where there aren't specialists in cancer treatment. Not here. It's probably the only place around where you have board certified oncologists – not residents, not fellows – taking the primary call of every minute, of every day throughout the year. That's why people are coming to us.”

In addition to the many structural and scientific advantages of partnering with the family at OHC, their willingness and ability to embrace therapies like CAR-T brings to bear another powerful ally in the fight. Hope.

“Because this is such a completely revolutionary treatment, it really gives hope to people. It gives hope to oncologists that we may find the day when we're not using chemotherapy anymore. That we will be able to teach our immune systems to recognize cancer cells and destroy them without destroying healthy cells. That gives hope.” ❖

OHC has 13 locations throughout the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana region with headquarters located at 5053 Wooster Road in Cincinnati. For more information on OHC, visit ohcare.com or call 888.649.4800