

**Conquer Cancer – Walther Cancer Foundation Career Development Award in Palliative and Supportive Care in Oncology**

**Award Term:** 7/1/2021-6/30/2024

**Supported by:** Walther Cancer Foundation



**Angela Steineck, MD, MS**

*Seattle Children's Hospital d/b/a Seattle Children's Research Institute*

*“Integrating the Voices of Children Into Treatment with CAR T-cell Therapy”*

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**Layperson Summary**

Treatment for recurrent childhood leukemia has changed immensely in recent years. Immunotherapy (training the immune system to kill cancer), including chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy, has helped more children than ever be able to get back into remission. Although we know CAR T-cell therapy can have severe side effects, especially early in treatment, our understanding of the experience from the child’s perspective is very limited. To know what is most bothersome for the child and change care so that we can provide the best quality of life possible, we need to ask the child about these things directly. Our study will use surveys, specially designed for children, and interviews to understand what it is like for a child to be treated with CAR T-cell therapy. We will use this information to find better ways to treat these symptoms, alleviate suffering, and improve how the child views their quality of life. Because parents are such an important part of their child’s care, we will also ask parents to complete their own surveys and to participate in an interview about the experience. We hope this information will provide families insight into what their child may expect to experience with these medicines and guide them in this very difficult decision-making process. We will also use this information to modify a patient care program that we have specifically designed to improve the CAR T-cell therapy experience for children and their families. As part of this study, we will start to test whether or not families find this program to be helpful. Our goal is that completion

of this study will produce a program that is ready to be tested in a larger clinical trial and will directly improve the care of children with cancer.

**Biography**

Dr. Steineck is a pediatric oncologist, whose goal is to preserve a child's quality of life while being treated for cancer. A child's quality of life is strongly influenced by the symptoms they experience from their cancer therapies. As new drugs are developed to cure cancer, Dr. Steineck strives to understand how the symptoms that occur with these new therapies influence quality of life. Chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy has shown great promise in children with advanced leukemias. CAR T-cell therapy also produces several characteristic side effects, resulting in a unique patient experience. In her current work, Dr. Steineck is developing a way to follow and better treat side effects of CAR T-cell therapy. By doing so, she hopes we can improve quality of life in children with cancer.