Parvesh Kumar, M.D. – Biography

During his three decades of experience in leadership roles and as a researcher in academic medicine, Dr. Kumar has established a track record of building research and clinical programs. He has been awarded extensive extramural grant funding from multiple funding sources such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Defense (DoD) and Pharma Industry. He has served as a Principal Investigator (PI) / Cod PI on several National Cancer Institute (NCI) sponsored multid institutional and multid disciplinary national cooperative group clinical trials in lung cancer, head and neck tumors and prostate cancer. He is a pioneer in the use of concurrent docetaxel chemotherapy with radiation therapy in locally advanced highd risk prostate cancer. Based upon pred clinical lab data, he conducted the first phase I clinical trial of concurrent docetaxel with radiation therapy, which established safe doses of this drug for use with radiation in patients with highd risk prostate cancer. Furthermore, he has published extensively and served on several NIH, NCI and DoD scientific study sections, institutional IRBs, national NCI sponsored cooperative group data safety and monitoring boards, and national scientific and educational program committees. In his many research leadership roles, Dr. Kumar has been a strong supporter of interdisciplinary translational research that incorporates health professionals from diverse disciplines including basic scientists.

Currently, Dr. Kumar serves as the Principal Investigator (PI) of the Mountain West (MW) Clinical and Translational Research Infrastructure Network (CTRd IN) and tenured Professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Medicine (SOM) since 2016. As PI, he directs the MW CTRd IN Program that is funded by the NIH for developing, establishing, and increasing research infrastructure and capacity in the Mountain West region involving a consortium of 13 university partners in seven states. Dr. Kumar successfully achieved the renewal of the MW CTRd IN grant for $20.3 million in 2018. Under Dr. Kumar's leadership, the MW CTRd IN Program has focused on health disparities in such areas as women's health, the underserved and other vulnerable patient populations by funding of pilot grants as well as providing programmatic support such as biostatistics, community engagement & outreach assistance, and professional development (e.g., mentorship, grant writing workshops). These pilot grants awardees include health professionals from various disciplines including medicine, basic sciences, nursing, social work, psychology, pharmacology, speech pathology, physical therapy, and other disciplines. Moreover, 80% of the pilot grant awardees consisted of junior/midd level faculty and over 80% were PhDs. In addition, Dr. Kumar initiated several novel programs to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among the 13 universities such as the Multid Site Pilot Projects, and the Developmental Translational Team Grants that fund clinicians and basic scientists to work together on translational research projects. Furthermore, in his role as Vice Dean of Research until May 2020, Dr. Kumar established and oversaw the school's research infrastructure to facilitate the capability to conduct phase II/III clinical trials while also substantially increasing its extramural grant funding.

Prior to joining UNLV, Dr. Kumar was recruited in 2010 to serve as tenured Professor, Chair of the Radiation Oncology Department and Associate Director (AD) of Clinical Research (CR) for the University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC) for his alma mater, the University of Kansas (KU) SOM. While Chair at KU SOM, he built the radiation oncology department into one of the largest programs in the U.S. by increasing the size of the faculty from 4 to 28 faculty members including physicists and radiobiologists, expanding the number of radiotherapy facilities from 1 to 7, and virtually tripling the program's patient volume. As Associate Director of Clinical Research, Dr. Kumar served as one of the key members of the Cancer Center's leadership team and played an integral role in KUCC achieving NCI cancer center designation, one of only 71 (4%) cancer centers in the U.S. that are currently NCI designated cancer centers. In his role as Associate Director of Clinical Research, he was the Chair and supervised 11 multid disciplinary Disease Working Groups (e.g., Lung Cancer, Genitod Urinary Tumors, Gastrointestinal Cancers, etc.) that included clinicians working with basic scientists. Furthermore, as AD of CR, he also oversaw the clinical trial portfolio that typically included over 100+ protocols annually at the KUCC assisted by a clinical trials office staff with almost 90 FTEs.

Dr. Kumar started his academic career in 1990 at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Univ. of Tennessee SOM where he established an academic radiation oncology program at the VA Medical Center in Memphis, TN. Then in 1998, he was recruited to serve as the Founding Chair of a new Radiation Oncology Department at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS) in New Jersey, and also served as the Associate Cancer Center Director for Radiation Oncology for the Cancer Institute of New Jersey, a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center at Rutgers RWJMS. As Chair, he built the department's research and clinical infrastructure, expanded the program to 3 facilities, and recruited 8 new faculty members. In 2003, Dr. Kumar was again recruited to serve as tenured Professor and Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Southern California (USC) Keck School of Medicine (KSOM), Los Angeles, and Chief of Service for the LA County (LAC) – USC Medical Center. During his seven year tenure at USC KSOM until 2010, he expanded the department's research and clinical programs, doubled the size of the physics division, recruited several radiation oncologists, significantly increased the program's patient volume and oversaw the design and construction of a brand new radiation oncology department at the LAC-USC Medical Center. He further founded and initiated the city-wide radiation oncology "mock" oral board examination for all of the residents in training in the Los Angeles area in collaboration with UC Irvine, UCLA, Kaiser Permanente and Vantage Oncology to help improve their American Board of Radiology pass rates. Dr. Kumar's productive research and academic leadership experiences at both public and private universities in diverse regions including the East Coast, West Coast, Midwest and Mid-South display his ability to effectively adapt to different academic cultures and achieve success through teamwork, collaboration, inclusivity and leading by example.

Dr. Kumar graduated from the University of Kansas (KU) in 1981 with a B.S. (with Honors) in Chemical Engineering and then proceeded to medical school also at the Univ. of Kansas. While in medical school, he was the recipient of a summer research scholarship award that allowed him to work in a basic science lab focused on the cloning of the Dengue-2 RNA virus genome. This lab experience fostered Dr. Kumar's perspective in incorporating basic science to advance translational research. Throughout his career, he has conducted collaborative research with radiobiologists and physicists including using pre-clinical data to formulate his own investigator initiated research projects. Dr. Kumar completed his residency training in Radiation Oncology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, serving as Chief Resident and Fellow of the American Cancer Society in his final year. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and playing basketball with his two sons.