

# NEWS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

### Three National Cancer Clinical Research Cooperative Groups to Merge

The [American College of Surgeons Oncology Group \(ACOSOG\)](#), [Cancer and Leukemia Group B \(CALGB\)](#), and [North Central Cancer Treatment Group \(NCCTG\)](#), which are National Cancer Institute (NCI)-funded cancer cooperative groups, today announced plans to merge.

The three groups will create one integrated cooperative group that will develop and conduct more efficient clinical research studies, thus bringing clinical trial results to patients more quickly.

“This announcement reflects the call in April 2010 from the Institute of Medicine to strengthen and streamline operations among NCI clinical trials cooperative group programs,” says [Jan Buckner](#), M.D., NCCTG group chair; professor of oncology; and chair of the Division of Medical Oncology at [Mayo Clinic](#) in Rochester, Minn. “We are excited to join with ACOSOG and CALGB to bring together outstanding, complementary scientific leadership, operations expertise and dedicated community and academic investigators to conduct high quality trials that will improve cancer care.”

In June 2010, ACOSOG, CALGB and NCCTG integrated their statistical, data management and information technology functions. In November 2010, NCI announced plans to transform the clinical trials system by reducing the number of adult cooperative groups from nine to four. Having already merged some functions, the three groups began evaluating the possibility of full integration to further streamline operations, expand their scientific research opportunities and apply for funding as a new, larger cooperative group.

“This merger creates a partnership between oncologists in all fields of cancer research that is supported by a network of strong community and academic institutions,” says [Monica Bertagnoli](#), M.D., CALGB group chair; professor of surgery at [Harvard Medical School](#); and chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology at [Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston](#). “The merger greatly expands our opportunities to conduct research that reaches all aspects of the health care system to benefit cancer patients nationwide.”

- next -

## Three National Cancer Clinical Research Cooperative Groups to Merge — page 2

[Heidi Nelson](#), M.D., ACOSOG group co-chair, and professor of surgery in the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, adds, “Each of our individual groups has scientific and organizational strengths. We are optimistic that when we join together, the sum will be greater than the individual parts, and the new scientific opportunities will advance cancer patient care.”

As part of the integration process, the groups plan to apply for the following grants:

- A U24 grant for a combined biospecimen and tissue bank
- A U10 grant for a new cooperative group with integrated scientific, operations, governance and membership functions

The three groups will work out details of this merger, and anticipate it will be completed by 2014.

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### **About ACOSOG**

The ACOSOG, a NCI-sponsored clinical research group, is dedicated to improving the care of the surgical oncology patient. Five hundred physician members contribute to the conduct of clinical trials in cancers of the breast, lung and gastrointestinal tract. ACOSOG's research aims are focused on investigating novel surgical and targeted therapies to maintain oncologic outcomes while reducing toxicities and disabilities; testing molecular and imaging profiling to enhance the accuracy of risk stratification; and applying neoadjuvant therapies to improve overall response rates and monitoring individual responses.

### **About CALGB**

CALGB, a NCI-sponsored clinical research group, was founded in 1955 as a network of institutions collaborating to conduct cancer treatment clinical trials. CALGB's scientific committees develop and implement multi-disciplinary cancer treatment, prevention and control trials to address leukemia, lymphoma, breast, gastrointestinal, genitourinary and respiratory malignancies.

### **About NCCTG**

NCCTG, a national clinical research group sponsored by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), is comprised of a network of nearly 400 community-based cancer treatment clinics in the United States and Canada that work with Mayo Clinic to conduct clinical research studies to advance cancer treatment.

### **About the Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program**

The Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program, sponsored by the [National Cancer Institute](#) (NCI), is designed to promote and support clinical trials (research studies) of new cancer treatments, explore methods of cancer prevention and early detection, and study quality-of-life issues and rehabilitation during and after treatment. The Cooperative Group Program involves more than 3,100 institutions that contribute patients to group-conducted clinical trials. More than 14,000 individual investigators are registered to participate in NCI-supported cooperative group studies. Cooperative groups place more than 25,000 new patients into cancer treatment clinical trials each year.