10 Years of PICI: From Discovery to Impact

Ten years ago, the Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy (PICI) was created around a bold premise: that progress in cancer research could be accelerated by changing not only what science pursued, but how science was organised.

The timing was significant. Immunotherapy was redefining what was possible in oncology, offering durable responses in cancers that had long resisted treatment. But scientific possibility alone was never enough. Discoveries still had to cross the difficult distance between laboratory insight and clinical reality.

Breakthroughs do not reach patients on their own.

They require exceptional fundamental science, collaboration across institutions and disciplines, infrastructure capable of supporting translation, investment willing to accept uncertainty, and systems designed to learn from both success and failure.

This *CancerWorld* special issue, dedicated to PICI's 10th anniversary, explores what can happen when those elements are deliberately brought together. Across these pages, scientists, leaders, entrepreneurs, and patients reflect on a decade shaped by discovery, collaboration, and the determination to turn scientific possibility into patient impact.

The meaning of that work becomes clearest in the experiences of patients. Mary Elizabeth Williams lived through the moment when experimental immunotherapy became a second chance at life. Ariana Nakata's journey shows both the extraordinary possibilities of emerging science and the barriers that can still separate innovation from the people who need it.

Their stories remind us that progress is not measured only by discoveries, publications, companies, or new therapies. It is measured by whether science changes what is possible for patients and whether those possibilities can actually be reached.

As PICI enters its second decade, new generations of cell therapies, therapeutic cancer vaccines, immune engineering, systems immunology, and computational science are expanding the boundaries of what may be possible. But the larger challenge remains: protecting bold discovery while building the ecosystem capable of carrying its most promising advances, responsibly and efficiently, toward patients.

It is not only a story about advancing cancer immunotherapy. It is a story about what becomes possible when the way science is done becomes part of the innovation itself.

Read the full issue here.