



Workshop on Understanding Plasticity and its Role Across the Cancer Continuum

September 23 -24, 2026

NCI Shady Grove Campus, Terrace Level, Room TE110

AGENDA

All times are listed in Eastern Time (ET)

DAY 1— Wednesday, September 23, 2026

8:30 AM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

Natalia Mercer, Ph.D., Program Director, Division of Cancer Biology, NCI

Dan Gallahan, Ph.D., Director, Division of Cancer Biology, NCI

Session 1: Mechanisms of cellular plasticity in cancer development and initiation

8:45 AM | Introduction of session chair

Ruibai Luo, Ph.D., Cancer Cell Biology Branch, DCB, NCI

Opening session 1

Jason Mills, M.D., Ph.D., Penn State College of Medicine (Chair)

8:55 AM | Introductory talk — Lineage plasticity: from embryology to cancer biology

Michael Shen, Ph.D., Columbia University

9:20 AM | Rewriting the Narrative: Epithelial plasticity as a barrier, not a bridge, to cancer

Kathy Del Giorno, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

9:40 AM | Repair of the intestinal epithelium: dissecting distinct cell states after injury

Ophir Klein, M.D., Ph.D., Cedars-Sinai Health Science University

10:00 AM | **Graded and switch-like modes of lineage plasticity in lung cancer**
Eric Snyder, M.D., Ph.D., University of Utah Health Academic Medical Center

10:20 AM | Coffee break

10:40 AM | **Acinar to ductal metaplasia: a classical model of unconventional cell plasticity**
Andrea Viale, M.D., UT MD Anderson Cancer Center

11:00 AM | **Cellular plasticity in the “abnormal-normal”**
Ken Lau, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

11:20 AM | **Panel discussion**

12:20 PM | Lunch break

Session 2: Mechanisms of cellular plasticity in cancer evolution and progression

1:20 PM | Introduction of session chair
Natalia Mercer, Ph.D., Tumor Biology & Microenvironment Branch, DCB, NCI
Opening session 2
Ben Stanger, M.D., Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania (Chair)

1:30 PM | Introductory talk — **Forcing through Metastasis: Regulation of Epithelial-Mesenchymal Plasticity by ECM Stiffness**
Jing Yang, Ph.D., University of California San Diego

1:55 PM | **Heterogeneity and Plasticity in SCLC**
Julien Sage, Ph.D., Stanford University

2:15 PM | **Mechanism of stress-adaptive plasticity in regeneration and cancer**
Karuna Ganesh, M.D., Ph.D., Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

2:35 PM | **Cell state plasticity across the metastatic cascade**
Andrew Ewald, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

2:55 PM | Coffee break

3:15 PM | **Switching or selection? Using barcodes to distinguish plasticity from clonal selection**

Sydney Shaffer, M.D., Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

3:35 PM | **Pancreatic cancer cell plasticity from initiation to metastasis**

Howard Crawford, Ph.D., Henry Ford Health

3:55 PM | **Panel discussion**

4:55 PM | Day 1 Closing remarks

Ruibai Luo, Ph.D., Cancer Cell Biology Branch, DCB, NCI

DAY 2— Thursday, September 24, 2026

Session 3: Mechanisms of cellular plasticity in cancer therapy sensitivity and resistance

8:35 AM | Introduction of session chair

Zhihui Liu, Ph.D., DNA and Chromosome Aberrations Branch, DCB, NCI

Opening session 3

Cory Abate-Shen, Ph.D., Columbia University (Chair)

8:45 AM | Introductory talk — **Shape Shifters: Cellular Plasticity as a Hallmark of Therapy Resistance and Metastases**

Anirban Maitra, M.D., NYU Langone Health

9:10 AM | **Uncovering Mechanisms of Treatment-associated Lineage Plasticity in Lung Cancer**

Katerina Politi, Ph.D., Yale School of Medicine

9:30 AM | **Cancer cell state transitions facilitate drug resistance according to developmental constraints**

Kwok-Kin Wong, M.D., Ph.D., NYU Langone Health

9:50 AM | **Beyond Oncogenes and Tumor Suppressors: Lineage Identity Defines Therapeutic Vulnerabilities in Cholangiocarcinoma**

Nabeel Bardeesy, Ph.D., MGH, Harvard Medical School

10:10 AM | Coffee break

10:30 AM | **Targeting Cancer Lineage Plasticity to Improve Treatment Outcomes**

David Goodrich, Ph.D., Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

10:50 AM | Sum up talk — **Reflections on Plasticity-driven Drug Resistance**

Charles Sawyers, M.D., Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

11:20 AM | **Panel discussion**

12:20 PM | **Closing remarks**

Jason Mills, M.D., Ph.D., Penn State College of Medicine

Ben Stanger, M.D., Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

Cory Abate-Shen, Ph.D., Columbia University

Jerry Li, Ph.D., Biophysics, Bioengineering, and Computational Sciences Branch, DCB,
NCI