Published in final edited form as:

Semin Oncol. 2010 December ; 37(6): 556. doi:10.1053/j.seminoncol.2010.10.009.

Introduction: Endocrine Cancers

H. Richard Alexander Jr, MD and

Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Surgery, University of Maryland, School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD

Karel Pacak, MD, PhD, DSc

Chief, Section of Medical Neuroendocrinology Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD, Guest Editors

This edition of *Seminars in Oncology* is dedicated to the topic of endocrine tumors, a dynamic and challenging area in oncology. The field of endocrine oncology is broad and complex and the principles related to diagnosis, staging, treatment, and follow-up are, in many ways, broadly relevant to the entire field of oncology but also have specific distinct dimensions to them. The successful management of a patient with an endocrine cancer requires an understanding of the molecular basis of neoplasia and highlights the importance of coordinated multi-disciplinary treatment planning to provide the optimal clinical outcome for patients afflicted with these conditions.

The chapters on endocrine cancers for this edition are based on specific disease sites, as well as some broader topics that span the entire discipline. We thank the contributing authors, all internationally recognized experts in their field, who have provided such concise, well-organized, up-to-date, and yet comprehensive reviews of their topics. There are three excellent chapters covering the spectrum of thyroid and parathyroid malignancies; one by Drs Zeiger and Burns from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, one by Drs Moley and Pitt from the Washington University School of Medicine, and a parathyroid cancer chapter by Dr Simonds and colleagues from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD. Adrenal medullary and cortical cancers are very nicely reviewed by Drs Pacak and colleagues, by Drs Fojo and Balasubramaniam also from the NIH. Professor Grossman and her colleagues from the Barts and London School of Medicine have contributed a chapter on estrogen- and androgen-producing cancers and Professor Manelli and his colleagues from the University of Florence have provided a chapter on evaluation and management of patients with incidentally discovered adrenal masses; both are exceptional reviews of those subjects. Professor Oberg from Uppsala University Hospital has provided a very comprehensive chapter on the subject of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors. Drs Stratakis and Lodish from the NIH and Drs Spiegel and Libutti from the Albert Einstein School of Medicine have contributed chapters on rare and unusual cancer syndromes and on future directions in endocrine oncology, both of which highlight the fundamental importance and emerging role of understanding the molecular basis of endocrine cancers in the diagnosis and treatment of patients afflicted with these conditions. Drs Oldfield and Sansur from the University of Virginia and the University of Maryland Schools of Medicine, respectively, have provided a very nice review of pituitary cancers and Drs Carrasquillo and Chen from

the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the NIH have assembled a very comprehensive review of functional imaging of endocrine cancers.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Dr Ernest Borden, Deputy Director at The Cleveland Clinic, Taussig Cancer Institute for the opportunity to serve as guest editors for this edition of *Seminars in Oncology* and we thank Michelle Weidner from his office who has kept us on schedule with respect to completion of this project. We know that the readers will find this to be a very comprehensive and authoritative review of this topic.