

Dr. Julianne M. Pollard-Larkin

Biography

Dr. Julianne M. Pollard-Larkin is a Professor of Medical Physics and Service Chief of Thoracic Radiation Physics at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. A physicist by training and a leader in cancer care, she has built a career at the intersection of physics, medicine, research, and education, demonstrating the transformative impact that physics can have on improving lives. She earned her B.S. in Physics and Mathematics from the University of Miami and her Ph.D. in Biomedical Physics from the University of California, Los Angeles before completing her medical physics residency at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

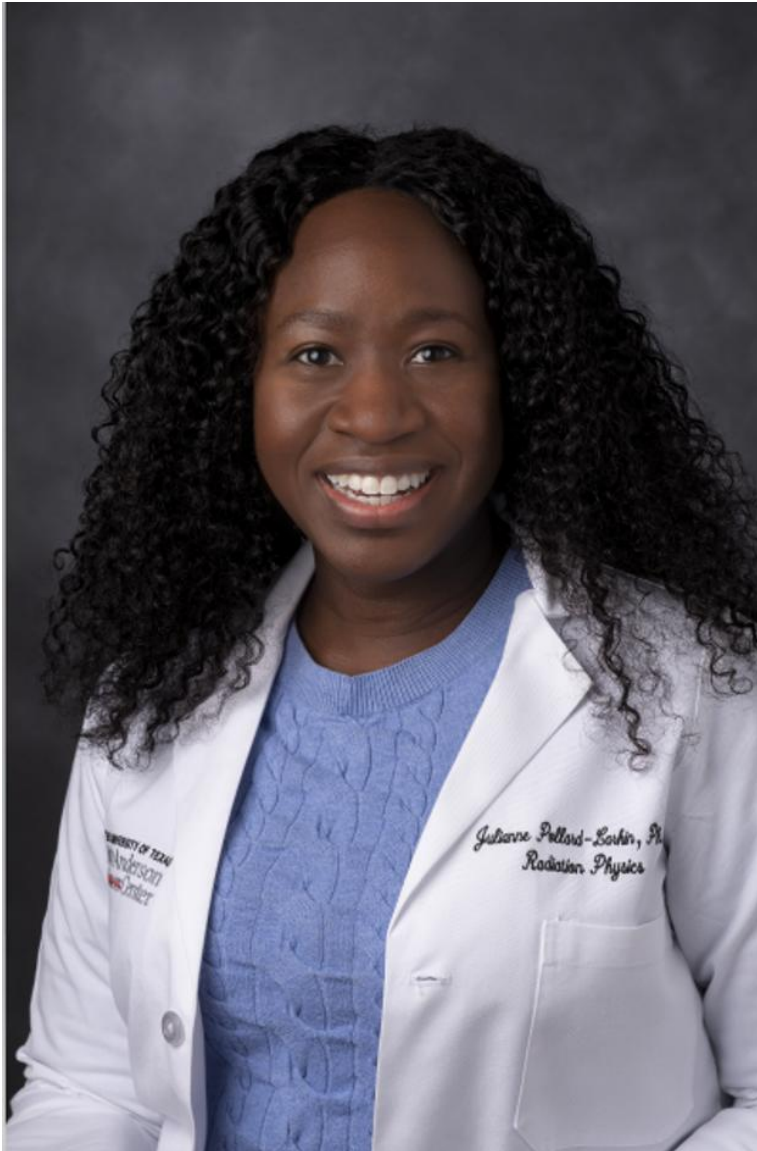
Dr. Pollard-Larkin's research focuses on innovative cancer treatments, including FLASH radiotherapy, motion management, and technologies that advance precision radiation therapy. Beyond her scientific contributions, she is a passionate mentor who has guided students, residents, and early-career scientists for more than a decade. She is a Fellow and Secretary Designate of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine and serves in numerous leadership roles dedicated to education, communication, and expanding opportunities in STEM.

A strong advocate for outreach and inclusion, Dr. Pollard-Larkin encourages students to embrace challenges, remain curious, and recognize that their unique experiences can become strengths that help shape the future of physics and science.

Lecture Title: “Medical Physics: Hidden Potential Behind Every Interaction”

Abstract:

Physics is a field dedicated to precision, accuracy, and geniuses. The impact of this can cause trainees and even faculty to feel the impostor syndrome if they are not grounded in a growth mindset. The field of Medical Physics is firmly a rigorous subfield of physics, but it has an interesting distinction in being one of the most welcoming STEM fields and it is one of the few fields in hardcore STEM that allows physicists to have a direct impact on health outcomes for the public. Radiation and Medical Physics do come with real physical risks, but the rewards for medical physicists are exponential. Medical Physics studies the interaction of radiation with matter but underlying its basic Physics principles is a field that can make use of any determined and academically grounded trainee and develop them into a qualified physicist capable of protecting the general public from extraneous radiation from medical sources, creating quality assurance programs for hospitals and even helping change the course of Radiation Oncology through novel research. This talk will highlight how this field is using scientists from many backgrounds to solve one of humanity's biggest problems-cancer. The goal of this talk will be to inform and remind educators and trainees alike that there is hidden potential in all of us.



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