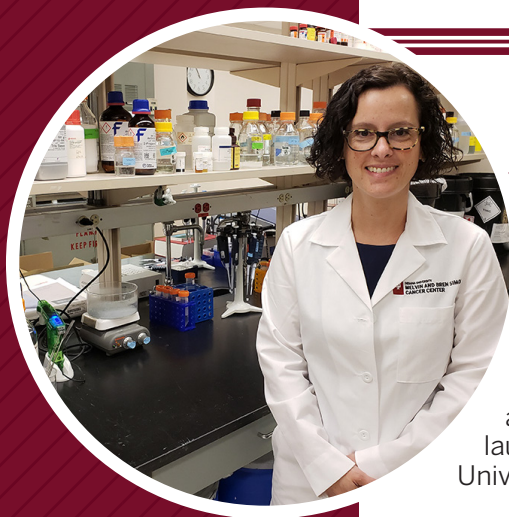


Meet The Pagano Scholar



Rachel Katzenellenbogen, MD, recently joined the faculty at IU School of Medicine as the inaugural Chuck and Tina Pagano Scholar and an associate professor of pediatrics. She is also a member of the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center.

Most recently an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington and Seattle Children's Research Institute, Dr. Katzenellenbogen graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University and earned her medical degree from The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

What attracted you to IU?

I was impressed by the integration of research and clinical care here, as well as the close partnerships between the hospitals and IU School of Medicine. I enjoy cutting-edge research, patient care and didactic teaching. I felt as though I could really grow in all of those areas here.

What led you into pediatrics?

In medical school, I realized that I really liked working with patients in their context; and in pediatrics, that is their family. As a pediatrician, and specifically in my area of specialization, adolescent medicine, you get to help your patients begin their lives with healthier choices. Teens are just starting to make their own decisions and empowering them to think for themselves in the best way possible is very exciting.

What is your cancer research focus?

My cancer research focus is on human papillomavirus or HPV. HPV is a very common infection in women and men; it causes about 5 percent of cancers worldwide. My research focuses on the fundamental way HPV drives cancer development and progression, how that drive is common to all cancers or is unique to this infection-associated cancer, and identifying ways we can detect and disrupt these pathways to intervene early in treatment.

How might that research benefit patients?

It is so important to understand the basics of a disease before you can treat it or prevent it. If you do not have that understanding, your treatment is just happenstance. By studying the basic steps that lead to HPV-associated cancers, we can then focus tests and treatments to best identify people at risk and develop precise treatments for them.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

I enjoy reading, running with my dog, gardening and trailing behind my kids and husband.

You've moved from one NFL city (Seattle) to another. Are you a football fan?

I am a football fan. My husband played football in high school and college, so I learned to love the game then. We also became big Seahawks fans over the past few years. When my son was in second grade, a University of Washington student was a volunteer in his classroom. That volunteer was Jermaine Kearse, who went on to play for the Seahawks. It was really fun to watch games with Jermaine. I'm looking forward to watching the Colts now... I'm very much honored to be the first Pagano Scholar. I'm learning more about the impact Coach Pagano has had here, and I'm looking forward to meeting him and representing his name well.

What else would you like people at IU to know about you?

I grew up in Champaign-Urbana, Ill., so this feels like coming home.



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