

## **The University of Rochester Dean's Professor of Surgery and Oncology**

**Karen M. Mustain, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

I was selected as an ELAM Fellow completed my fellowship during the 2017/2018 academic year.

I was nominated by Dr. Friedberg and supported and mentored by Dr. David Linehan, Dr. Gary Morrow and a senior NCI Official Dr. Lori Minasian, Deputy Chief of the NCI Division of Cancer Prevention. I had just become Co-Director of our \$30 million dollar University of Rochester Cancer Center NCI Community Oncology Research Program Research Base; this is a huge cancer clinical trial network spanning the entire United States and comprised of over 600 community oncology practices and more than 3000 oncology providers.

My ELAM project was to help the UR by helping Wilmot Cancer Institute achieve designation as an NCI Designated Cancer Center. My project involved doing more than 40 interviews with leaders across the University of Rochester where I listened and learned about their roles at the University and how I could help; I also shared our vision of becoming an NCI designated cancer center and garnered input on our goal. I interviewed Cancer Center Directors, Associate Directors and investigators from other NCI designated cancer centers to gain insight and

caring for our patients and their families and friends. We are more engaged with the community, and we understand their needs better and we can find innovative ways in our research to meet their needs as it relates to cancer. Our scientists and clinicians are celebrated across the globe for their groundbreaking research and patient care. I am optimistic that we will indeed achieve our goal of becoming an NCI designated cancer center in the fall of 2024. It will have taken 8 years to see my project through to completion and to do my part in helping our institution. I am truly grateful for my ELAM experience and thank all my mentors.