

NCI Director Monica Bertagnolli Diagnosed With Early Breast Cancer

The new director of the National Cancer Institute says her prognosis is very favorable.

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Monica Bertagnolli, MD, an oncologist who was [recently appointed](#) director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has announced that she was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Bertagnolli caught the cancer early, when it's easier to treat, and her prognosis is good.

Below is a [statement from Bertagnolli](#) released by the National Institutes of Health.

Statement from Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD, Director, National Cancer Institutes, National Institutes of Health

I was very recently diagnosed with early breast cancer. The prognosis is very favorable.

The cancer is hormone receptor-positive, HER2-negative breast cancer and appears to be confined to the breast. I will need surgery and possibly additional treatment. As is the case for many people after a cancer diagnosis, I'm in a waiting period right now and there are things we don't know. But thanks to research funded by NCI, answers about the treatment that's best for me will come in time.

I am thankful to be receiving excellent care at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer Institute, where I worked as a surgical oncologist for many years before coming to [NCI in October](#).

I have also enrolled in a clinical trial focused on diagnosis, and I'm pleased that my experience will contribute to the ever-expanding knowledge base about cancer and inform advances in care. I am grateful that I had access to effective screening and caught this early.

As doctors, we are also human, and we are not fundamentally different from the people that we care for just because we are on the provider side of things. The patient experience is something that I think everyone goes through in life—although each individual's experience is unique, especially when it comes to cancer.

Having been an oncologist my entire career, it was always—and still is—all about the patients and survivors. It's one thing to know about cancer as a physician, but it is another to experience it firsthand as a patient as well. To anyone with cancer today: I am truly in this together with you.

I am excited to continue in my role as NCI Director and will take leave as needed with some extra support from NCI's leadership team. I want everyone with cancer to know that they are not alone. NCI is doing everything we can to work together—with all of society—to help more people with cancer live the full and active lives they deserve.

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