

# Changing the Face of Critical Trials

**D**r. David S. Mendelson lives by the guiding philosophy that cancer patients deserve the most innovative, cutting-edge treatment possible.

Dr. Mendelson earned a medical degree and completed internal medicine residency at Ohio State University. After completing fellowship training in medical oncology and hematology at Duke University, he joined the faculty as a clinical instructor and research fellow in Immunohematology.

By the 1990s, Dr. Mendelson relocated to Ariz. where he served as Chairman of the Department of Medicine and an Executive Committee member at Banner Thunderbird Medical Center. He volunteered as a committee adviser for the American Society of Clinical Oncology to develop clinical care guidelines in the areas of prostate cancer and thrombotic (clotting) complications in cancer patients.

In 2001, he joined the University of Arizona as Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, working with medical oncologist, Dr. Michael S. Gordon, to create the Drug Development Program of the Arizona Cancer Center, Greater Phoenix Area. Together they launched Pinnacle Oncology Hematology in 2005, a community-based medical practice focused on wellness and care of patients using a unique model with both clinical and research focus.

“Clinical trials represent an important part of cancer research – and one that needs to grow further in Arizona,” Dr. Mendelson, says. “The testing of new medications to either treat cancer or relieve side effects is critical to advancing the care and management of patients with cancer.”

Today, Pinnacle Oncology is internationally recognized and respected for excellence in clinical research and partnerships with biotechnology and pharmaceuticals to provide new drug therapies for patients with cancer. Dr. Mendelson and team have acted as consultants to the pharmaceutical industry drug development. They have donated time and expertise to the National Cancer Institute’s drug assessment programs and recently named an institutional site, for the National Surgical Breast and Bowel Program, a government-funded national cooperative research group.



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In addition, they partnered with Arizona Center for Cancer Care in Peoria to bring their research programs to the Southeast Valley, making medical trials more accessible to Valley patients.

“It should certainly be noted, however that not all patients may be candidates for research studies, and in some cases; studies may not be available for a particular diagnosis or stage of cancer,” Dr. Mendelson says. “However, our attitude is that only through research can advances be made and only through advances, can cancer be slowed or cured.”

According to Dr. Mendelson, there are different types of clinical trials that involve patient participation. Most, involve the study of a new drug or treatment and they are separated into three phases of research.

“The steps to enrollment in a clinical trial are fairly standard and include an informed consent discussing for review that describes the “who, what, where, when, why and how” of the trial,” Dr. Mendelson says. “Patient safety is always our first concern.”