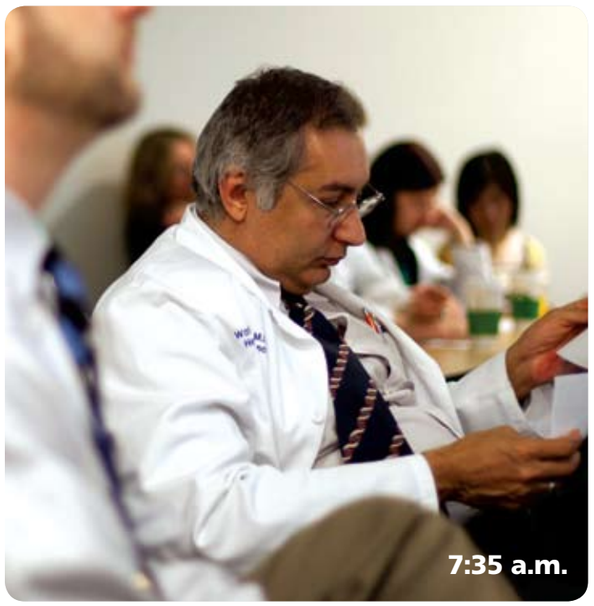
Dr. Wafik El-Deiry has a lot of questions about how cancer cells respond to treatment. Key to his search is an American Cancer Society grant.

quest for ANSWERS

BY BRIAN COOK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERT VANDERVEEN

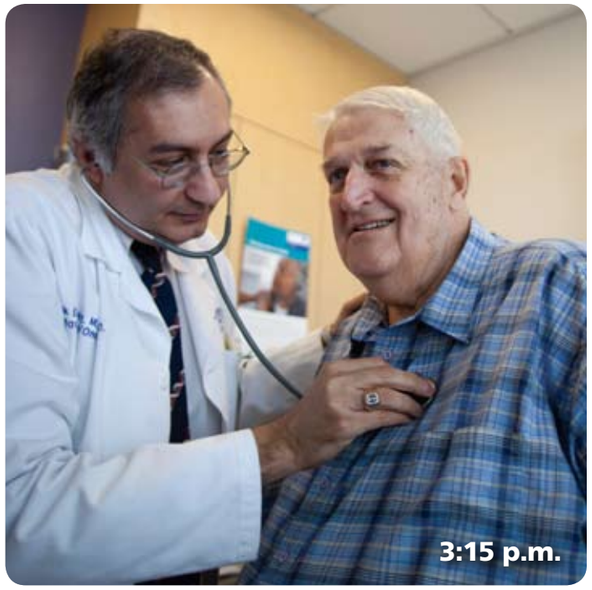
"WE'RE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW CANCER cells die, how they're affected by chemotherapy or newer agents, why they become resistant to certain treatments and how to develop strategies to reverse the resistance," says Wafik El-Deiry, MD, PhD, chief of hematology/oncology at Penn State Hershey Medical Center. Supporting his study of colorectal cancer and his hunt for promising new therapies is a prestigious, five-year $400,000 American Cancer Society Research Professorship, which he says has "a huge impact" on what he and his team are able to accomplish. "It gives me the freedom and flexibility to go in the most innovative directions, in ways I wouldn't be able to otherwise."



"BULLPEN" BRAINSTORM
El-Deiry regularly confers with colleagues during so-called "bullpen" sessions to review patients' test results and plan cancer treatment strategies.

A CLOSER LOOK
In his lab, El-Deiry and postdoctoral scientist Nathan Dolloff, PhD, review an image of tumor cells. "We're looking to understand how the cells are likely to behave during treatment. It's a very exciting area, and we're gaining momentum every week.

TEAM EFFORT
"I build bridges between clinical disciplines and basic sciences," says El-Deiry. Here, he shares news about clinical trials and diagnostic advances with fellow physicians and researchers.



IN THE EXAM ROOM
The meetings, the lab work and the collaborations all come together when El-Deiry is able to provide the latest lifesaving treatments for his colorectal cancer patients.