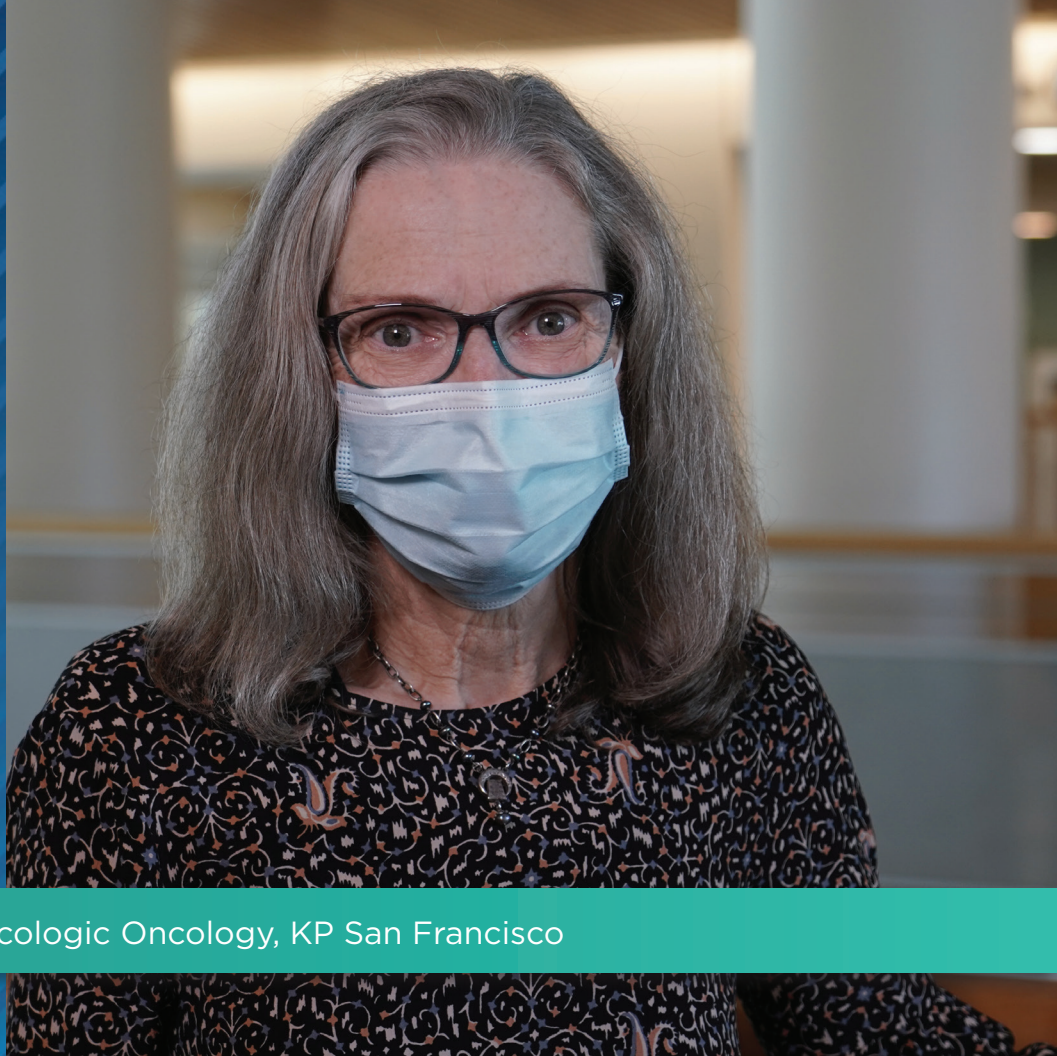


“Preventing cancer prevents patients from suffering. That’s why my research has been focused on identifying patients at inherited risk and developing strategies to help them and their families lead long, healthy lives.”



**Bethan Powell, MD** - Gynecologic Oncology, KP San Francisco

## 2021 Morris F. Collen Research Award for Career Contribution

One need look no further than the more than 100 research articles Dr. Powell has published in the past 30 years to appreciate her passion for improving care for women with increased hereditary risk for breast and ovarian cancer.

“Dr. Powell has dedicated her career to research in the prevention and early detection of hereditary cancers, and how to support women in their decisions around preventative surgery and mitigate the morbidity of those surgeries,” says Betty Suh-Burgmann, MD, gynecologic oncologist and chair of the Central Research Committee at the KP Division of Research. “Her career exemplifies the marriage between clinical care and research, and the translation of research findings into clinical practice.”

Dr. Powell joined The Permanente Medical Group mid-career in 2008 and immediately founded the multidisciplinary Hereditary Cancer Center at KP San Francisco. She then collaborated with TPMG physician colleagues to create a network of five additional centers, for which she won a Sidney Garfield Exceptional Contribution award in 2019. Dr. Powell’s body of research informed the development of this network of clinics, and it continues to influence evidence-based clinical guidelines and improve care for women at inherited cancer risk in KP Northern California and beyond.

One recent example is her study on streamlining genetic testing for women with ovarian cancer, published in *Gynecologic Oncology* in November 2020.

“All women diagnosed with ovarian cancer should have genetic testing because the results impact the treatments they receive and identify family members at risk,” says Dr. Powell. “Our study assessed the feasibility of having gynecologic oncologists explain genetic testing to patients and order the tests directly, instead of referring women to genetics departments for pre-testing counseling. It resulted in 100% of patients getting genetic testing, up from 67%, with faster testing and greater efficiency of our resources.” This streamlined approach has since been implemented in clinical practice throughout KP Northern California.

Dr. Powell credits Kaiser Permanente’s supportive environment, research resources, and collaborative clinical teams for enabling her impressive body of research and improvements in patient care. “In Kaiser Permanente, there’s an opportunity to take ego out of the equation and put multidisciplinary collaboration in,” she says. “This, plus our large volume of patients and integrated electronic health record system, make it possible to do the kinds of studies I’ve been doing successfully.”