

## Women in Science: Kristen Harrington-Smith

Kristen Harrington-Smith discusses her work as Vice President and Head of CAR-T US at Novartis Oncology.

Jun 13, 2018



Kristen Harrington-Smith, Vice President and Head of CAR-T US, Novartis Oncology

We recently sat down with Kristen Harrington-Smith, who serves as Vice President and Head of our CAR-T US team. Individualized CAR-T therapy uses a patient's own immune system to fight certain types of cancers – and Kristen plays a key role in helping to achieve our goal of reimagining medicine. In this latest installment of “Novartis Presents: Women in Science,” she shares key insights into her day-to-day role. Learn more as Kristen reflects on her career in healthcare.

### **When did you first know you wanted to work in science?**

I started my career as a consultant working with various healthcare companies. I realized then that I wanted to focus the next phase of my career in the healthcare field. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to work across different therapeutic areas and I find joy in knowing that my work can directly impact the lives of others.

### **What is your advice for young women and girls interested in science?**

My advice is to be confident and don't be intimidated if you don't have a science background. You may need to work harder to understand the science, but you need to follow your heart. There is a strong sense of purpose in what we do and, at the end of the day; our work impacts the lives of patients everywhere. If you wake up every morning with a passion to make a difference, the extra work is well worth it. And who knows, maybe your unique strengths will make a different contribution to the team beyond the science.

### **What is your favorite part of your job at Novartis?**

I feel as though I have the best job in the industry. The CAR-T team is an amazing group of people and we are establishing an entirely new way of delivering medicine and a new option in the fight against cancer. It is even more special that our first indication is in a pediatric population that has run out of options. Every patient has their own story, and we are working to help change that story for the better.

My work provides a strong sense of purpose, unlike anything I have ever experienced. I work with amazing people, and the work we do has a direct impact on our patients.

### **What is the most challenging part?**

The most challenging but also the most rewarding part of my role is working across multiple functions (e.g., manufacturing, quality, supply chain and access). This is something I've never done before, so it's been a true learning experience. While we work in a "big pharma" atmosphere, it is our ability to keep a startup mentality that drives our success.

### **What skills are most important as a leader?**

Most of my core values and leadership skills come from my experience playing high school and college sports. My experience taught me the importance of teamwork, leadership, discipline and how to compete. These skills have been sharpened over time. I am consistently impressed by how much I still learn from my team at Novartis each day.

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*"Novartis Presents: Women in Science" is an ongoing series showcasing women at Novartis who are helping develop innovative oncology medicines for people with cancer and related diseases.*

Get to know Kristen Harrington-Smith, VP and Head of CAR-T US at Novartis Oncology. #WomenInScience

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