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# Charles Sawyers Elected President of the American Association for Cancer Research



By [publicaffairs@mskcc.org](mailto:publicaffairs@mskcc.org), Tuesday, March 20, 2012

## Summary

[Alumni](#)

Beginning in April 2013, physician-scientist Charles Sawyers will serve as President of the American Association for Cancer Research, the world's oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research.

Memorial Sloan Kettering physician-scientist [Charles Sawyers](#) has been elected President of the [American Association for Cancer Research \(AACR\)](#), the world's oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research. Dr. Sawyers, Chair of the [Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program \(HOPP\)](#) at Memorial Sloan Kettering, will officially become President-elect during the AACR's Annual Meeting 2012, held March 31 to April 4, and will serve for one year as President beginning in April 2013.

In his new role, Dr. Sawyers will work collaboratively with the AACR's 34,000-plus membership to further the organization's mission to accelerate progress toward the prevention and cure of cancer.



Charles Sawyers, Chair of the Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program

"We are thrilled that [Charles Sawyers](#) has been elected to serve the AACR as President," says Memorial Sloan Kettering President and CEO [Craig Thompson](#). "Charles has been a tremendous asset to MSK and the cancer research community. His scientific achievements and research into the molecular forces that drive cancer growth and resistance to therapy have had a direct influence on the current treatment landscape, as well as on the patient experience. I'm certain he will be just as influential to the AACR."

Dr. Sawyers is investigating the signaling pathways that promote the growth of cancer cells, with an eye toward designing new treatments. His research has been instrumental in the development of two drugs for the treatment of chronic myeloid leukemia — imatinib (Gleevec®) and dasatinib (Sprycel®), which work by blocking the activity of BCR-ABL, the mutant protein that causes the disease. His work has been widely recognized as revolutionizing the molecular treatment of cancer.

His current focus is on developing new treatments for patients with [prostate cancer](#) by exploring the mechanisms of resistance to hormone therapy. A promising new compound his lab helped to identify, called MDV3100, showed such significant improvement in overall survival in patients with advanced prostate cancer that the phase III trial was stopped early in November of last year so patients in the placebo arm could be offered the drug. Memorial Sloan Kettering's Genitourinary Oncology Chief [Howard Scher](#) is leading those clinical trials.

A member of the AACR since 1998, Dr. Sawyers has demonstrated his dedication to the organization through extensive service and leadership. Among his many contributions, he has served as keynote speaker and scientific committee co-chairperson for the AACR-NCI-EORTC International Conference "Molecular Targets and Cancer Therapeutics," co-chairperson of the AACR's special conferences "Targeting the PI3 Kinase Pathway in Cancer" and "Emerging Concepts in Oncology," and chairperson of the AACR's educational workshop "Molecular Biology in Clinical Oncology."

He is scientific editor of *Cancer Discovery* and associate editor of *Clinical Cancer Research*, both journals of the AACR, and from 2000 to 2004 was associate editor of *Cancer Research*, also an AACR publication. Additionally, in 2009 Dr. Sawyers was [named a "Dream Team" leader by Stand Up To Cancer](#), a collaboration between the Entertainment Industry Foundation and AACR to fund promising cancer research. Dr. Sawyers co-leads a

collaborative team that is studying targeted therapies to treat women's cancers.

Dr. Sawyers is a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, past President of the American Society of Clinical Investigation, and a member of the [National Academy of Sciences](#) and the [Institute of Medicine](#). He has received numerous honors and awards, including the [Dorothy Landon-AACR Prize for Translational Cancer Research](#), the [American Society of Clinical Oncology's](#) David A. Karnofsky Award, and the [Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award](#).

Dr. Sawyers received his MD degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1985. He joined Memorial Sloan Kettering in 2006 after nearly two decades at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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