Charles Sawyers, Chair of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program

## Summary

Charles Sawyers, Chair of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program, is a recipient of the inaugural $3 million prize for groundbreaking achievements in scientific research.

Charles L. Sawyers , Chair of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program (HOPP) , was awarded the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences today. The award – established by Art Levinson, Sergey Brin, Anne Wojcicki, Mark Zuckerberg, Priscilla Chan, and Yuri Milner –

recognizes “excellence in research aimed at curing intractable diseases and extending human life.”

A total of 11 recipients were announced, each of whom will receive $3 million.

“We commend Charles on this remarkable honor,” says Memorial Sloan Kettering President and CEO Craig B. Thompson . “We are also grateful to the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences Foundation for its acknowledgment and support of scientists who are making profound contributions to human health.”

## Revolutionizing Targeted Therapy

Dr. Sawyers is an internationally recognized physician-scientist and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator whose research focuses on cancer drug resistance with an eye toward developing novel therapies.

His insights into the mechanism of resistance to standard hormone therapy for advanced prostate cancer led him to the discovery of the drug enzalutamide (Xtandi®), which was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2012 .

Dr. Sawyers shared the 2009 Lasker~DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for earlier work leading to the development of the ABL kinase inhibitor imatinib (Gleevec®) for patients with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) and the second-generation ABL inhibitor dasatinib (Sprycel®) to overcome imatinib resistance. These are revolutionary treatments that together have transformed CML into a manageable condition.

“I’m overwhelmed and deeply grateful to be chosen for this award, which is as welcome as it is entirely unexpected,” Dr. Sawyers says. “I’m honored to be in such distinguished company. I am also thankful to this visionary foundation for its contribution toward elevating the role of science in society and for opening the doors to new discoveries.”

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## A Scientific Leader

A member of President Obama’s National Cancer Advisory Board , the Institute of Medicine, and the National Academy of Sciences , Dr. Sawyers has received numerous honors and awards, including the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Memorial Award from the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR); the David A. Karnofsky Memorial Award from the American Society of Clinical Oncology; and the Dorothy P. Landon-AACR Prize for Translational Cancer Research .

He is President-elect of the AACR and a past President of the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and has served on the National Cancer Institute’s Board of Scientific Counselors. He also holds the Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Chair at Memorial Sloan Kettering.

Dr. Sawyers received a bachelor’s degree from Princeton University and a medical degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1985. He joined Memorial Sloan Kettering in 2006 as the inaugural director of HOPP after nearly two decades at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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