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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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FOR THE MEDIA

[Joan Massagué](#), Chair of the [Cancer Biology and Genetics Program](#) in the [Sloan Kettering Institute](#), is the recipient of the 2007 Passano Award for the originality and importance of his work elucidating the mechanism of action for transforming growth factor-beta (TGF- β) signaling.



Joan Massagué

The TGF- β family of proteins can both activate and inhibit cell growth. The proteins play a key role in the proliferation and differentiation of many different cell types. In cancer, TGF- β can act as a tumor suppressor in early stages of cancer and as a promoter of metastasis in the later stages of tumor progression. Much of Dr. Massagué's recent work has focused on metastasis, the process by which cancer spreads from one part of the body to another. His laboratory has identified sets of genes that drive the spread of [breast cancer](#) to the bone and the lungs.

A leader in the fields of both cancer biology and cell biology, Dr. Massagué earned his PhD from the University of Barcelona and completed his postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University. In 1982 he joined the faculty at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He came to Memorial Sloan Kettering in

1989 as Chair of Sloan Kettering Institute's [Cell Biology Program](#) , and became Chair of Cancer Biology and Genetics in 2003. He is also a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator and a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and he holds an Alfred P. Sloan Chair at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Since 1945, the Passano Foundation has encouraged medical science and research, particularly activities that have a broad impact and clinical application. Dr. Massagué will deliver the Passano Foundation Lecture at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore on April 24, 2007.

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