

## Foundation for the NIH Awards 2019 Trailblazer Prize for Clinician-Scientists to Dr. James Kochenderfer

**BETHESDA, MD, October 24, 2019** – The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) bestowed the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Trailblazer Prize for Clinician-Scientists (Trailblazer Prize) to James Kochenderfer, M.D., of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), at the FNIH Annual Fall Board Dinner. Dr. Kochenderfer received the Trailblazer Prize and a \$10,000 honorarium for pioneering the development of immunotherapies that leverage chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cells to treat blood cancers. The Trailblazer Prize is made possible by a generous donation from John I. Gallin, M.D., and Elaine Gallin, Ph.D., to the FNIH.

The Trailblazer Prize recognizes the outstanding contributions of early career clinician-scientists whose work has the potential to or has led to innovations in patient care and seeks to raise awareness of the critical role the clinician-scientist plays in biomedical research and clinical care. Dr. Kochenderfer and prize finalists Ami S. Bhatt, M.D., Ph.D., Stanford University, Evan Macosko, M.D., Ph.D., Broad Institute and Giovanni Traverso, M.B., B.Chir, Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School gave presentations at an event on Capitol Hill to inform policymakers about their research and the need to inspire more clinician-scientists to join the field. The FNIH’s Charles A. Sanders Legacy Fund has awarded all finalists with \$5,000 in support for their laboratories.

“It is our pleasure to bestow the 2019 Trailblazer Prize to Dr. Kochenderfer for his revolutionary research and clinical work that is changing how we treat blood cancers,” said Steven M. Paul, M.D., Chairman of the Board, FNIH. “We enjoyed celebrating his achievements along with those of Drs. Bhatt, Macosko and Traverso last night at the Fall Board Dinner and thank each of them for helping us shine a light on the critical role clinician-scientists play in translating scientific innovation from the laboratory to patient care.”

Dr. Kochenderfer was selected as the winner of the Trailblazer Prize by a jury of distinguished biomedical research leaders, chaired by Michael J. Welsh, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Pappajohn Biomedical Institute, University of Iowa. In addition to Dr. Welsh, other members of the esteemed jury include:

- Barry Collier, M.D., Vice President for Medical Affairs, Physician in Chief, David Rockefeller Professor
- Michael Fox, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Neurology, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School; 2018 FNIH Trailblazer Prize Recipient
- Helen H. Hobbs, M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine and Molecular Genetics, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
- John I. Gallin, M.D., NIH Associate Director for Clinical Research and Chief Scientific Officer, NIH Clinical Center
- Crystal Mackall, M.D., Ernest and Amelia Gallo Family Professor of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine, Stanford University
- Steven M. Paul, M.D., Chairman of the Board, FNIH; President and Chief Executive Officer, Karuna Therapeutics, Inc. and Venture Partner at Third Rock Ventures

Dr. Kochenderfer is an Investigator in the Surgery Branch, at the Center for Cancer Research, at NCI. T cells are part of the immune system that help us fight infections. Using gene therapy, they can be modified to target and attack a specific cancer. Dr. Kochenderfer was the first to design and demonstrate the effectiveness of anti-CD19 CAR T cells in humans, leading to the first approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration of a CAR T-cell therapy for lymphoma. He also led the first clinical trials focused on the anti-B-cell maturation antigen (BCMA) CAR for the treatment of multiple myeloma. He currently has open trials investigating novel CAR T cell therapies for both diseases and is developing new methods to improve the cancer fighting ability of CAR T cells. Dr. Kochenderfer earned his M.D. and B.A. from West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV.

For more information about the Trailblazer Prize, visit [fnih.org/TrailblazerPrize](https://fnih.org/TrailblazerPrize).

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