



American Association for Cancer Research®

FINDING CURES TOGETHER®

Embargoed for Release: 10 a.m. CET / 5 a.m. EDT, Tuesday, March 10, 2026

For media inquiries, please contact Julia Gunther at julia.gunther@aacr.org or 770-403-7690. For a photo of Lowy, [click here](#). For a photo of Schiller, [click here](#). Visit our [newsroom](#).

Douglas R. Lowy, MD, FAACR, and John T. Schiller, PhD, FAACR, Honored with the 2026 Pezcoller Foundation-AACR International Award for Extraordinary Achievement in Cancer Research

SAN DIEGO – The [Pezcoller Foundation–American Association for Cancer Research](#) (AACR) International Award for Extraordinary Achievement in Cancer Research will be presented to Douglas R. Lowy, MD, and John T. Schiller, PhD, both Fellows of the AACR Academy, during the [AACR Annual Meeting 2026](#), to be held April 17-22 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California.

The [Pezcoller Foundation-AACR International Award for Extraordinary Achievement in Cancer Research](#) was established in 1997 to recognize scientists who have made major scientific discoveries in basic or translational cancer research. Awardees must be active in cancer research, have a record of recent noteworthy publications, and be conducting ongoing work that holds promise for continued substantive contributions to progress in the field of cancer.

Lowy is principal deputy director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and chief of the Laboratory of Cellular Oncology at NCI. Schiller is deputy chief of the Laboratory of Cellular Oncology at NCI and chief of the lab's Neoplastic Disease Section. Both Lowy and Schiller are NIH Distinguished Investigators.

Close collaborators for more than 30 years, Lowy and Schiller developed the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine that protects against cervical cancer and other HPV-induced cancers. In addition to making the key scientific discoveries underpinning the current HPV virus-like particle vaccines that are produced globally by five companies, Lowy and Schiller showed that the vaccine was effective in animals; developed the serological assays needed for vaccine development and characterization; identified the vaccine's salient immune responses; demonstrated its safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy in humans; and determined its in vivo mechanism of action.

The HPV vaccine is the first vaccine developed specifically for cancer prevention. Infection by certain HPV types, especially HPV16 and HPV18, causes nearly all cervical cancers, the fourth most common cancer in women worldwide. HPV16 also causes most anal cancers and more than half of all vulvar, vaginal, penile, and oropharyngeal cancers. HPV-induced cancers account for approximately 690,000 cancer diagnoses each year. Of these diagnoses, the majority are for cervical cancer, which leads to an estimated 350,000 deaths worldwide annually. Vaccination has dramatically reduced cervical cancer incidence in younger women in countries with high HPV vaccine uptake since its introduction 20 years ago, and it is estimated that 1 million future HPV-induced cancers have already been prevented by the current vaccination programs. If further implemented globally, Lowy and Schiller's vaccine, which protects against the most common cancer-causing HPV types, could prevent nearly all cases of cervical cancer and other HPV-induced cancers. Lowy and Schiller, together with their NCI and Costa Rican collaborators, were instrumental in the World Health Organization's recent recommendation of single-dose vaccination programs, which is expected to further promote global uptake of the vaccines.

"Drs. Lowy and Schiller have transformed the landscape for HPV-induced cancers through their innovative scientific research and unwavering commitment to improving public health," said Margaret Foti, PhD, MD (hc), chief executive officer of the AACR. "The HPV vaccine is a remarkable cancer prevention

tool that has protected countless individuals and saved many thousands of lives around the world. We are immensely proud to honor Drs. Lowy and Schiller with this award in recognition of their discoveries and dedicated leadership that have contributed to this paradigm-shifting breakthrough. Their success in developing the HPV vaccine also underscores the importance of sustained support for NCI so that similar progress against cancer can continue.”

“We are particularly pleased and proud that this year's Pezcoller Foundation-AACR International Award has been given to Dr. Lowy and Dr. Schiller, the developers of the HPV vaccine,” said Enzo Galligioni, MD, president of the Pezcoller Foundation. “This is a prime example of how cancer research can save lives, as the vaccine has demonstrated since its introduction 20 years ago.”

Lowy has been a member of the AACR since 2001 and was elected as a Fellow of the AACR Academy in 2015. He received the AACR-Margaret Foti Award for Leadership and Extraordinary Achievements in Cancer Research in 2021 and the AACR Distinguished Public Service Award in 2020. Lowy cochaired the AACR International Conference: Infection and Cancer in 2019 and has served on the editorial board for the AACR journal *Cancer Discovery* since 2011.

Schiller was elected as a Fellow of the AACR Academy in 2024. He received the AACR-American Cancer Society Award for Research Excellence in Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention in 2011. Lowy and Schiller were jointly awarded the Dorothy P. Landon-AACR Prize for Translational Cancer Research in 2007.

Together, Lowy and Schiller have received many scientific honors and awards recognizing their discoveries, including the Lasker~DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award in 2017; the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, awarded by President Barack Obama in 2014; and the Federal Employee of the Year Service to America Medal from the Partnership for Public Service in 2007. Other joint awards include the VinFuture Grand Prize (2025), the Prince Mahidol Award (2022), the Stanford Drug Discovery Lifetime Achievement Award (2020), the Szent-Györgyi Prize for Progress in Cancer Research (2018), the Gen-Probe Joseph Public Health Award from the American Society for Microbiology (2017), the PhRMA Research & Hope Award (2013), the Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal from the Sabin Vaccine Institute (2011), the Discovery Award from the Dermatology Foundation (2008), the Hubert H. Humphrey Award for Service to America from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008), the Novartis Immunology Prize for Clinical Immunology (2007), and the Dr. Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service from the American Medical Association (2007).

Lowy is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences (2009) and the National Academy of Medicine (2003). Schiller is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences (2020) and a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (2016).

Lowy earned his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine and completed residencies in internal medicine and dermatology at Stanford and Yale, respectively, before joining NCI. Schiller joined NCI after earning his doctoral degree from the University of Washington. They will present their joint award lecture during the AACR Annual Meeting 2026 on Sunday, April 19, at 12 p.m. PT.

###