

# AACR VIRTUAL PATIENT ADVOCATE FORUM: COVID-19 AND CANCER

## Speaker Bios



### **MARGARET FOTI, PHD, MD (HC)**

**Chief Executive Officer, American Association for Cancer Research  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Margaret Foti, PhD, MD (hc), is the chief executive officer of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the first and largest cancer research organization in the world. Under her visionary leadership, membership has grown from about 3,000 members to over 47,000 in 127 countries and territories, and the AACR's portfolio of peer-reviewed scientific journals has increased from one to nine.

Foti progressed through several key editorial and management roles in scientific publishing to become chief executive officer. She launched eight major peer-reviewed scientific journals: *Blood Cancer Discovery*, *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*; *Clinical Cancer Research*; *Molecular Cancer Therapeutics*; *Molecular Cancer Research*; *Cancer Prevention Research*; *Cancer Discovery*; and *Cancer Immunology Research*. She also helped launch *Cancer Today*, a magazine for cancer patients, survivors, and their families and caregivers, as well as a new AACR publication, titled *Leading Discoveries*.

A graduate of Temple University, Foti is one of the most influential voices in advancing the field of cancer research, both in the United States and abroad. She was elected president of three professional societies in scholarly publishing and in cancer research. She has also served as a board member, committee member, and consultant to a number of other nonprofit organizations. There is a legacy of young women, minority scientists, and investigators-in-training whose careers have been advanced as a result of her mentorship and support.

Under Foti's leadership, the AACR has served with distinction as the Scientific Partner of Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C). In this capacity, Foti and the AACR staff have brought significant expertise to their work with SU2C, especially in the scientific peer review of projects, scientific project management, grants administration, communications, and science policy.

Foti's leadership was instrumental in the production of the first landmark *AACR Cancer Progress Report* in 2011 and the equally important subsequent annual reports which celebrate advances in basic, translational, and clinical cancer research, all of which has had a major impact on therapeutic development and improved patient care.

Foti's contributions have been widely recognized by numerous awards from organizations around the world. Her lengthy list of formal recognitions includes honorary degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Rome La Sapienza and the University of Catania in Sicily, and an honorary degree in medicine from the University CEU of San Pablo in Madrid. She was recognized with the 2018 Women for Oncology Award from the European Society for Medical Oncology, the 2016 PHL Life Sciences Ultimate Solution Award, the Ovarcome Excellence 2016 Award, the 2016 James Ewing Layperson's Award from

the Society of Surgical Oncology, the 2016 Honorary Member Award from the Oncology Nursing Society, and as a 2015 honoree of “the one hundred” by Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center. Additionally, she received the 2015 Children’s Champion Award from the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, the 2014 Ellen V. Sigal Advocacy Leadership Award from Friends of Cancer Research, the 2014 Morton M. Kligerman Visiting Professorship Award from the University of Pennsylvania, the 2013 Stanley P. Reimann Honor Award from Fox Chase Cancer Center, and the 2013 Distinguished Partner in Hope Award during the Annual Colorectal Cancer Conference hosted by the Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania. In 2007, the AACR established the first AACR Margaret Foti Award for Leadership and Extraordinary Achievements in Cancer Research, which is given annually in her name. Her visionary leadership, combined with her steadfast focus on the AACR’s mission, continues to drive the field forward towards the vital goal of preventing and curing all cancers.



**ANNA D. BARKER, PHD**

**Chief Strategy Officer, Ellison Institute of Transformative Medicine, University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, California**

Anna Barker, PhD is the Chief Strategy Officer at the Ellison Institute, where she is building networks of leading experts in medicine, science and engineering, that will help the Ellison Institute advance scientific discoveries and innovations that solve complex problems in cancer and other diseases. Previously, Barker served as the principal deputy director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and deputy director for strategic scientific initiatives. In these roles she led the development of foundational platforms and national programs to support the emerging concept of precision medicine. During her tenure at the NCI, she collaboratively planned and implemented a number of strategic convergence programs that emphasized innovation, networks of global institutions, team science and publicly available data.

Initiatives and programs under Barker’s leadership include: The Cancer Genome Atlas co-developed with the National Human Genome Research Institute the Biospecimens Research Network; the NCI Clinical Proteomics Technology in Cancer Initiative; the NCI Alliance for Nanotechnology in Cancer Program; and the Physical Sciences-Oncology Centers Program (which connects physicists, mathematicians, engineers and cancer scientists dedicated to developing a fundamental understanding of cancer), among several others. Additionally, Barker collaborated with the leadership of the FDA and was founding co-chair of the NCI-FDA Interagency Oncology Task Force, the Cancer Steering Committee of the Foundation for the NIH Biomarker Consortium and she led the NCI’s international programs.

Most recently, Barker served as Director of Transformative Healthcare Networks, co-director of Complex Adaptive Systems -Biomedicine (CAS) and professor of practice, School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University (ASU). In these roles, she designed and implemented “knowledge network” models that address complex diseases such as cancer as complex adaptive systems. These systems approaches have been employed to create innovative solutions in areas such as biomarker discovery and development, new clinical trial designs, and the roles of big data and artificial intelligence in precision medicine. As a result of her efforts, she led the development of the biomarker and clinical trials sections of the 21 Century Cures Act. Barker will maintain a courtesy appointment as a distinguished visiting fellow at ASU in Complex Adaptive Systems.

Barker also spent several years at Battelle Memorial Institute, a nonprofit transdisciplinary research and development organization where she started as a research scientist and subsequently progressed to several senior executive roles. Over the course of her career, she has received a number of awards for her contributions to cancer research, and for her work with cancer patients, professional and advocacy organizations and the ongoing national effort to prevent and cure cancer. Barker received her M.A. and Ph.D. from Ohio State University where she studied chemistry, immunology and microbiology.



**ADAM HAYDEN, MA**

**Scientist <-> Survivor Program Patient Advocate, AACR  
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Adam Hayden, MA is a writer, speaker, and organizer. Adam Hayden is a philosopher of science, a champion of the humanities in medical education, an advocate for palliative care, and a person living with brain cancer (glioblastoma). Diagnosed with brain cancer in 2016 while completing his requirements for his graduate degree in philosophy, Adam blogs about philosophy, illness, and healthcare. He serves on multiple national advisory councils focused on patient engagement and advocacy, he is a member of the American Association for

Cancer Research (AACR) scientist-survivor program and he co-moderates a monthly social media chat and a virtual support group for the brain tumor community. Find Adam on Twitter, @adamhayden, and read his blog [www.glioblastology.com](http://www.glioblastology.com)



**STEVEN K. LIBUTTI, MD, FACS**

**Director, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey  
Vice Chancellor for Cancer Programs, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences  
Professor of Surgery, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School  
Affiliated Distinguished Professor in Genetics, Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences  
Senior Vice President, Oncology Services, RWJ Barnabas Health  
Newark, New Jersey**

Steven K. Libutti, MD, FACS was appointed Director of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and Vice Chancellor for Cancer Programs, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences in January 2017. In addition to his leadership roles within Rutgers University, Dr. Libutti serves as Senior Vice President of Oncology Services for RWJ Barnabas Health. He is also a Professor of Surgery at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and an Affiliated Distinguished Professor in Genetics, Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences.

After graduating magna cum laude from Harvard College, Dr. Libutti received his medical degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. He remained at Presbyterian Hospital in New York where he completed his residency in surgery, followed by a fellowship at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in surgical oncology and endocrine surgery. He continued at the NCI where he became a tenured Senior Investigator and Chief of the Tumor Angiogenesis Section in the Surgery Branch.

Dr. Libutti is an internationally known expert in endocrine surgery and the management of neuroendocrine tumors and Past President of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons. His clinical practice focuses on gastrointestinal malignancies including cancers of the liver and pancreas. The recipient of funding from the NCI for the past 20 years, Dr. Libutti is also a researcher whose work focuses on developing novel cancer therapies through an understanding of the tumor microenvironment as well as on a better understanding of the tumor suppressor genes *MEN1* and *FILIP1L*. He has published over 300 peer reviewed journal articles, is Editor-in-Chief Emeritus.



**LAURA ESSERMAN, MD, MBA**

**Director, UCSF Carol Franc Buck Breast Cancer Center  
Alfred A. de Lorimier Endowed Chair in General Surgery  
Professor of Surgery and Radiology  
San Francisco, California**

Dr. Laura Esserman, MD, MBA is a surgeon and breast cancer oncology specialist practicing at the UCSF Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center where she has also held the position of Director since 1996. She co-leads the Breast Oncology Program, the largest of the UCSF Helen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center's multidisciplinary programs. The program is comprised of 69 faculty

members who represent 16 academic specialties and is internationally recognized and well-established with major initiatives in epidemiology, genetics, biology, therapeutics, and clinical cancer care. She is a professor of Surgery & Radiology at UCSF and faculty at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center where she founded the program in Translational Informatics. As part of this program, her research has focused on bioinformatics, medical and clinical informatics, systems integration, and clinical care delivery.

She has worked at UCSF to develop interdisciplinary teams of clinicians and researchers to bring the best care to patients and find the best platform to integrate translational research and improve the delivery of breast cancer care. In 2005, she received the NCI SPORE Investigator of the Year Award, an internationally recognized honor and designation.

She is the Principle Investigator of the I-SPY TRIAL program, a multi-site neoadjuvant clinical trial that has evolved into a model for translational research and innovation in clinical trial design.

Dr. Esserman has recently launched a University of California-wide breast cancer initiative called the Athena Breast Health Network, a project designed to follow 400,000 women from screening through treatment and outcomes, incorporating the latest in molecular testing and web-based tools into the course of care.

Dr. Esserman is nationally and internationally known as a leader in the field of breast cancer and has published over 150 articles in peer-reviewed journals covering all aspects of breast health including information systems, immunology, decision making, health policy and the use of imaging. She speaks extensively at public and private forums within the U.S. and internationally. Overall, Dr. Esserman's research and writing tends to focus on the goal of giving patients better access to accurate information so that they can become partners in their health care.

She is a member of President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) Working

Group on Advancing Innovation in Drug Development and Evaluation, which is studying how the federal government can best support science-based innovation in the process of drug development and regulatory evaluation. In addition, she is a contributing member of a “taskforce” for President Obama’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

Dr. Esserman received her Bachelor's degree in History of Science from Harvard University and completed her M.D. at Stanford University. She completed her surgery residency and oncology fellowship at Stanford University Medical Center. After her training, she joined the faculty at Stanford and received a Hartford fellowship to attend Stanford Business School where she received her M.B.A. in 1993. She then joined the faculty at the University of California, San Francisco.



### **AVRUM “AVI” SPIRA, MD, MSC**

**Global Head of the Lung Cancer Initiative (LCI) at Johnson & Johnson**

**Professor of Medicine, Pathology and Bioinformatics**

**Alexander Graham Bell Professor in Health Care Entrepreneurship, Boston University**

**Director, Boston University - BMC Cancer Center**

**Boston, Massachusetts**

Avrum “Avi” Spira, MD, MSc is the Global Head of the Lung Cancer Initiative (LCI) at Johnson & Johnson which is developing solutions to prevent, intercept and cure lung cancer. Practicing medicine for more than 20 years, Dr. Spira leads a team of dedicated scientists and medical professionals focused on developing novel technologies and approaches for earlier lung cancer detection and treatment.

In addition to leading the Johnson & Johnson Lung Cancer Initiative, Dr. Spira is an attending physician in the Medical Intensive Care Unit at Boston University—Boston Medical Center (BMC) and is a Professor of Medicine, Bioinformatics and Pathology at Boston University. He also serves as the Alexander Graham Bell Professor in Health Care Entrepreneurship at Boston University. He has served as the Director of the Boston University-BMC Cancer Center and founding Chief of the Division of Computational Biomedicine at Boston University.

Since his 2003 appointment to the BU faculty, Dr. Spira has built a translational research program that focused on genomic alterations associated with smoking-related lung disease, leading to a molecular test for the early detection of lung cancer that has successfully translated into the clinic (Percepta™) as well as a novel therapeutic for COPD that is in preclinical development. Dr Spira has served as Principal Investigator on grants from the National Cancer Institute; National Heart, Lung, Blood Institute; National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; and the Department of Defense and has authored more than 150 peer-reviewed publications. He currently leads the Stand-Up-To-Cancer (SU2C)- LUNGevity-ALA Lung Cancer Interception Dream Team and the NCI Moonshot’s HTAN Lung Precancer Atlas Research Center. He was elected a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation in 2010 and a member of the Association of American Physicians in 2017.

Dr. Spira obtained his M.D. from McGill University in Montreal, completed his internal medicine residency at the University of Toronto and his fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at BMC. During his fellowship, he obtained a master’s degree in Bioinformatics from Boston University.



**DAVID A. TUVESON, MD, PHD, FAACR**

**Director and Roy J. Zuckerberg Professor of Cancer Research  
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) Cancer Center  
Cold Spring Harbor, New York**

Dr. Tuveson is the director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Cancer Center in Cold Spring Harbor, New York, where he is also the Roy J. Zuckerberg professor of cancer research. Additionally, he is the chief scientist for the Lustgarten Foundation in Woodbury, New York, the largest pancreatic cancer research philanthropy. Dr. Tuveson is a medical staff affiliate at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and also works closely with the Cancer Institute at Northwell Health on Long Island. Dr. Tuveson serves on the Board of Scientific Advisors of the National Cancer Institute. He is a world-renowned physician-scientist whose basic and translational research focuses on increasing our understanding of the biology of pancreatic cancer and on identifying and testing in preclinical and clinical settings new approaches for diagnosing and treating the disease.

An AACR member since 2003, Dr. Tuveson is a scientific editor of the AACR journal *Cancer Discovery*. Among his other contributions to the AACR, he previously served as vice chair for the AACR Annual Meeting Program Committee (2018-2019); chair of the Pezcoller Foundation-AACR International Award for Cancer Research Committee (2019); chair of the Plenary Session for the Special Conference, “Pancreatic Cancer: Advances in Science and Clinical Care” (2016); cochair of the Special Conference, “Pancreatic Cancer: Innovations in Research and Treatment” (2014); cochair of the Program Committee for the AACR International Conference on Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research (2008); and cochair of the Mentored Grants and Research Fellowships Committee (2008). He has also served as a member on multiple AACR committees, including the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network-AACR Innovative Grants Scientific Review Committee (2008-2010); the Program Committee (2008) and Scientific Review Committee (2007) for the AACR International Conference on Molecular Diagnostics in Cancer Therapeutic Development; and the Annual Meeting Education Committee (2006 and 2011). In addition, Dr. Tuveson has been a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee for Stand Up To Cancer since 2012.

Dr. Tuveson was elected to the 2020 class of Fellows of the AACR Academy. He has been recognized with a host of other honors and awards throughout his career, including the Hamdan Award for Medical Research, Excellence – Pancreatic Diseases (2016), the Jan Waldenstrom Medal from the Swedish Society of Oncology (2014), the Ruth C. Brusky Award for Excellence in Clinical Research on Pancreatic Cancer, PancreasFest (2010), the Norbert and Suzanne Schnog Lectureship for Yale University (2005), the Frank Brooks Memorial Lectureship for the American Pancreatic Association (2004), the Rita Allen Foundation Scholar Award (2003), the AACR-PanCAN Career Development Award in pancreatic cancer research (2003), and the Forbeck Scholar Award from the William Guy Forbeck Research Foundation (2000). He is also an elected member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (2016) and was a recipient of the Physician-Scientist Early Career Award from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (1999).

Dr. Tuveson received his bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1987 and his doctoral and medical degrees from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1994. He

completed his residency in internal medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in 1997, and completed a fellowship in hematology and oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Cancer Center in 2000. He was a postdoctoral fellow at MIT from 1997 to 2002.