



PRESS RELEASE

Aragon Pharmaceuticals' Founder, Dr. Charles Sawyers Awarded 2009 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award

La Jolla, CA – October 27th, 2009: Aragon Pharmaceuticals is pleased to announce that Dr. Charles Sawyers, a founder of Aragon Pharmaceuticals, was recently awarded the 2009 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award.

The award is being presented in recognition for his pioneering work in deciphering the mechanism through which patients become resistant to cancer therapy. Dr. Sawyers' observations ultimately led to the development of improved therapeutics, such as Gleevec and Sprycel for treating patients with Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML).

The Lasker Awards are one of the most prestigious and coveted awards presented in the United States for biomedical research. They are sometimes referred to as 'America's Nobel Prize'. Many Lasker recipients are subsequently bestowed that honor as well, with over seventy Lasker award winners going on to becoming Nobel Laureates. (<http://www.laskerfoundation.org/awards/2009clinical.html>)

This honor truly reflects the scientific caliber of Dr. Sawyers as a physician-scientist and a leader in the field of translational medicine. Similarly, it reflects Aragon's goal of becoming a leading cancer therapeutics company by working with key thought leaders that have made invaluable scientific contributions in their field. We are very proud and excited to be working with Dr. Sawyers to achieve Aragon's vision.

Aragon seeks to exploit Dr. Sawyers' latest research to discover the next generation of anti-cancer treatments for hormone dependent cancers. Aragon's discovery platform is based on the recent, novel findings of Dr. Sawyer's that explain why nearly all prostate cancers become resistant to anti-hormonal therapies. This work has broad implications not only for prostate cancer but also for other hormone dependent cancers such as breast and ovarian cancer and represents an opportunity to develop entirely new approaches for the treatment of these diseases.

Aragon Pharmaceuticals is a San Diego-based biopharmaceutical company built on the pioneering research of Charles Sawyers, M.D., an investigator at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and Michael Jung, Ph.D., a professor at UCLA, who are founders of Aragon. Their recent discoveries show that the biology of hormone-resistant cancers can be overcome through the creation of a new class of nuclear receptor targeting drugs, thereby opening the door to a pipeline of new anti-endocrine therapies. This approach will produce drugs that are mechanistically distinct from existing therapies in the clinic and the current research pipeline.