AACR Special Conference in Cancer Research:

Fusion-positive Cancers: From Discovery to Therapy

January 13-15, 2026 | Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing | Philadelphia, PA

COCHAIRS

Natasha J. Caplen, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD
Mark E. Hatley, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, TN
Ross A. Okimoto, University of California San Francisco, San Franciso, CA
Kimberly Stegmaier, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026

Registration 3:00 p.m.- 7:00 P.M.
Grand Ballroom Foyer

Welcome and Keynote Lectures
4:00- 5:45 p.m. |
Grand Ballroom ABC

4:00 – 6:15 p.m. **Keynote Addresses**

Session chair and keynote speaker introduction: Kimberly Stegmaier, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

4:15 – 5:00 p.m. **Keynote 1: Gene fusions in sarcomas, from genetics to immunology**
Olivier Delattre, Institute Curie, Paris, France

5:00 – 5:45 p.m. **Keynote 2: Unraveling Gene Fusions in Solid Tumors: Pathways to Precision Oncology**
Arul Chinnaiyan, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

5:45- 6 p.m. **Break**

6:00- 7:00 p.m. Plenary Session 1: **Fusion oncogenes - Discovery to treatment**
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session Chair: Kimberly Stegmaier, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

6:00-6:30 p.m. **Fusion oncogenes: Discovery to treatment – A pathologist experience**
Cristina Antonescu, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, New York

6:30-7:00 p.m. **Title: Fusion Oncogenes – Discovery to Treatment Lessons from Fibrolamellar Carcinoma**
Sanford Simon, The Rockefeller University, New York, New York

Opening Reception and Poster Session A

7:00- 9:00 p.m. |
Grand Ballroom D

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026

7:00 A.M.- 7:30 P.M. Registration
Grand Ballroom Foyer

7:00- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
Grand Ballroom Foyer

8:00 -10:00 a.m. **Plenary Session 2: Genetics, cellular origins, and model systems**
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session chair: *Mark Hatley , St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee*

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Developmental reprogramming in the origin of pediatric fusion oncogene sarcomas**
James F. Amatruda, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **Modeling genetic, epigenetic and developmental heterogeneity in fusion-driven pediatric AML**
Jeffrey MaGee, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. **Insights into PAX3:: FOXO1 alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma tumor initiation**
Mark Hatley, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

9:30 – 9:45 a.m. **TFE3 fusions link tryptophan metabolism to AhR activation in tRCC: a targetable vulnerability** *
Xiang Li, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas

9:45- 10:00 a.m. **Domain-specific oncogenic functions of VGLL2::NCOA2 in infantile rhabdomyosarcoma** *
Chinmay Sankhe, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. Break
Grand Ballroom Foyer

10:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m. Plenary Session 3: Mechanism Based Therapeutics
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session chair: Ross Okimoto, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, California

10:30 – 11:15 a.m. **Keynote 3: Targeting the MLL Complex in Leukemia**
Scott Armstrong, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

11:15 – 11:45 a.m. **Fusion proteins in CIC-DUX4 and Ewing Sarcomas: Novel Mechanisms and Targeting Approaches**
Hua Yu, City of Hope National Medical Center, Duarte, California

11:45 a.m. – 12 15: p.m. **Targeting replication stress and cell cycle checkpoint to overcome CIC-rearranged sarcomas**
Ross Okimoto, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, California

12:15 – 12:30 p.m. **KLIPP: Targeting fusion oncogenes with CRISPR***
Mats Ljungman, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

12:30 -2:00 p.m. Lunch on your own

2:00-4:15 p.m. Plenary Session 4: Condensates: Fact or Fusion?
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session chair: Natasha Caplen, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland

2:00- 2:30 p.m. **Modulating fusion oncoprotein condensates to treat cancer**
Danfeng Cai, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland

2:30- 3:00 p.m. Re-evaluating the role of condensation in RTK fusion signaling
Lukasz Bugaj, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

3:00-3:30 p.m. **Biocondensates in action: The formation and reformation of EWSR1, FUS and TAF15 ribonucleoprotein networks**
Natasha Caplen, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland

3:30- 4:00 p.m. Chromatin regulation by FET Fusion IDRs
Miguel Rivera, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts

4:00- 4:15 p.m. **Drugging condensates in fusion-positive cancers with an integrated discovery platform***
Andrew Seeber, Transition Bio, Somerville, Massachusetts

4:15- 4:30 p.m. Break

4:30- 6:30 p.m. **Plenary Session 5: Translating Discoveries toward New therapies**
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session chair: Jolanta Grembecka, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

4:30 – 5:00 p.m. **Drug Development Advances: ROS1, RET, TRK, and NRG Fusions**
Alexander Drilon, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, New York

5:00- 5:30 p.m. **Targeted menin inhibition to disrupt leukemia fusion oncoproteins: From discovery to therapeutic applications**
Jolanta Grembecka, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

5:30- 6:00 p.m. **Advances in ALK fusion-positive lung cancers**
Jessica Jiyeong Lin, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts

6:00- 6:30 p.m. **NUT carcinoma: myths, mysteries, and momentum**
Jia Luo, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

6:30- 7:00 p.m. **Lightning Talks**
Grand Ballroom ABC

Exploiting the dependency on DDX19A to induce transcriptional catastrophe in Ewing sarcoma
Saikat Chakraborty, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

Low-order assemblies drive RTK fusion signaling without condensation
David Gonzalez-Martinez, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fetal differentiation programs afford a protective barrier to NUP98 fusion-driven AML initiation
Jihye Yoon, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri

Deciphering the developmental epigenetic programs at risk of brain cancer
Alisa Kardian, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

Uncovering novel molecular vulnerabilities in PICALM::MLLT10 driven pediatric acute myeloid leukemia
Lauren J. Ezzell, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

PAX3::FOXO1-targeting PROTACs in fusion-positive rhabdomyosarcoma
Nikola Knoll, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

YAP1::TFE3 fusion protein promotes transformation and EndMT plasticity in epithelioid hemangioendothelioma
Jason Hanna, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

7:00- 9:00 p.m. Reception/Posters B
Grand Ballroom D

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026

7:00 A.M.- 7:30 P.M. Registration
Grand Ballroom Foyer

7:00- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
Grand Ballroom Foyer

8:00-10:00 am **Plenary Session 6: Gene Regulatory Mechanisms of Oncoproteins**
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session chair: Eleni Tomazou, St. Anna children's Cancer Research Institute, Vienna, Austria

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Mechanisms of ZFTA- Fusion driven cancer**
Stephen Mack, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **Fusion-driven sarcomas: From epigenetic profiling to unexplored vulnerabilities**
Eleni Tomazou, St. Anna children's Cancer Research Institute, Vienna, Austria

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. ***WWTR1(TAZ)-CAMTA1* gene fusion in epithelioid hemangioendothelioma, a sarcoma with endothelial differentiation that is vulnerable to CDK9 inhibition**
Brian Rubin, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio

9:30 – 9:45 a.m. **Targeting chromatin–cell-cycle vulnerabilities in high-risk pediatric acute myeloid leukemia***
Gabriel Boyle, Seattle Children's Research Institute, Seattle, Washington

9:45- 10:00 a.m. **CBFA2T3–GLIS2 fusion reprograms enhancer-linked DNA methylation to enforce apoptotic resistance and defines an epigenetic vulnerability in pediatric AML***
Samrat Roy Choudhury, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, Arkansas

10:00 – 10:30 am **Break**

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m Plenary Session 7: Discovery of new targets with Functional and Chemical Genomics
Grand Ballroom ABC

Session chair: David McFadden, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas

10: 30 – 11:00 a.m. **Reimagining druggability using chemoproteomic platforms**
Daniel Nomura, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, California

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. **Phenotypic screening for small molecule modifiers of the EWSR1::FLI1 transcriptional program**
David McFadden, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas

11:30a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Targeting fusion-driven cancers
Kimberly Stegmaier, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

12:00– 12:30 p.m. **Fusion partners as novel therapeutic opportunity for fusion-positive cancer**
Sean Misek, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

12:30 - 12:45 p.m. Closing Remarks
Grand Ballroom ABC