



Association of American Cancer Institutes

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) is grateful for the service of **Norman E. “Ned” Sharpless, MD**, who announced on April 4 that he is stepping down from his position as director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Dr. Sharpless will continue in the role through April 29. NCI Principal Deputy Director **Douglas R. Lowy, MD**, will serve as NCI’s acting director effective April 30.

Since his appointment as NCI director in 2017, Dr. Sharpless has championed health equity and diversity in the cancer research workforce; developed the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative; and advocated for policies to ensure continued support for investigator-initiated research in cancer. He has also used his platform to urge adults to resume cancer screenings amid the COVID-19 pandemic and increase the NCI payroll to 15 percent by 2025.

During his tenure as NCI director Dr. Sharpless made multiple appearances as a featured speaker at AACI meetings and authored editorials for the AACI *Commentary* series. Dr. Sharpless was a member of AACI’s Board of Directors and director of the University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, an AACI member, when he was tapped to lead NCI.

In a statement, he noted that his successor would have a “full plate” with Biden administration initiatives including the Cancer Moonshot 2.0 and ARPA-H. He also stated that NCI leadership should reflect the gender and racial diversity of the populations served by the NCI.

“The NCI has made great strides under the exceptional leadership of Dr. Sharpless,” said AACI President **Caryn Lerman, PhD**, director of USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. “We are grateful for his advocacy for increased cancer research funding and his encouragement of collaboration across our nation’s cancer centers, as well as his commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”