

The American Cancer Society Awards the 2025 Medal of Honor to Dr. Kimryn Rathmell

ATLANTA, March 6, 2025 - In recognition of her commitment to tackling the complexities and challenges of cancer, the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) awarded the 2025 Medal of Honor to Dr. W. Kimryn Rathmell, MD, PhD, MMHC. The Medal of Honor is the American Cancer Society's most prestigious award given to distinguished individuals who have made valuable contributions in basic, clinical, translational or population science and whose work has led to advancement in cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or survivorship to improve the lives of patients.

Dr. Rathmell is a renowned kidney cancer expert with numerous achievements in translational research and treatment of complex and hereditary kidney cancers. Her work has led the way in molecular characterization of renal cell carcinomas, focusing on underlying drivers of kidney cancers using genetic, molecular, and cell biology to develop interventions to improve the lives of people with cancer. Dr. Rathmell also co-founded RMC Alliance, a nonprofit organization that supports patients with renal medullary carcinoma (RMC).

Most recently, Dr. Rathmell served as the 17th director for the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Prior to that role, she was the Hugh Jackson Morgan Chair in Medicine, chair of the Department of Medicine, and physician-in-chief at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

"Dr. Rathmell is committed to developing more precise and durable therapies for cancer patients. Her tireless work is transforming treatment approaches and offering hope to patients, survivors, caregivers, and loved ones," said [Dr. William Dahut](#), chief scientific officer for the American Cancer Society. "We are deeply grateful for her contributions to help end cancer as we know it, for everyone."

"It is a tremendous honor to receive this award, particularly at a time in our history when the value of cancer research is under fire," said Dr. Rathmell. "It is a privilege to be a part of the incredible culmination of scientific knowledge, human ingenuity, and committed effort that has fueled progress in cancer over the last 20+ years. Seeing the transformation in care happening in real time is thrilling, and I'm motivated to keep pushing to accelerate science-driven cancer advances."

Dr. Rathmell received her bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa. She received her PhD in biophysics and her medical degree from Stanford University. She completed an internal medicine internship at the University of Chicago and a residency and fellowship in medical oncology at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2022, she completed her masters of management in health care from Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Management.

Dr. Rathmell will be celebrated at the Medal of Honor Ceremony on March 8, 2025, in Washington, D.C.

Originally called the American Cancer Society Award, the Medal of Honor was first presented in 1949. Candidates for the Medal of Honor are nominated by the scientific community and the ACS Board of Directors.


The most recent ACS Medal of Honor was awarded to Dr. Pasi A. Jänne of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in 2024. Previous recipients of the Medal of Honor also include George N. Papanicolaou, MD, inventor of the Pap test; Robert C. Gallo, MD, recognized for his achievements in pioneering the field of human retrovirology; and Judah Folkman, MD, a leading researcher in the field of antiangiogenesis.

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 110 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

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