

# CEO Roundtable on Cancer Appoints Two Esteemed Oncology Leaders to Life Sciences Council

*Dr. Kimryn Rathmell and Dr. Sunil Verma Join Life Sciences Council to Help Drive Multisector Collaboration and Strategic Progress in Clinical Cancer Research*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The CEO

Roundtable on Cancer has appointed

two of the most respected leaders in oncology to its Life Sciences Council: W. Kimryn "Kim" Rathmell, MD, PhD, CEO of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute, and Sunil Verma, MD, Senior Vice President and Global Head of the Oncology Franchise at AstraZeneca.



The new appointments reflect the Council's continued mission to harness expertise across academia, industry, and government to accelerate therapeutic innovation. Jean-Charles Soria, MD, PhD, Senior Vice President of Oncology R&D at Amgen and Chair of the Life Sciences Council, noted the significance of their addition: "The Life Sciences Council is a model for how collaboration can lead to real innovation. We're thrilled to welcome Dr. Rathmell and Dr. Verma, whose insight and experience will be instrumental as we tackle oncology's most complex challenges."

Dr. Rathmell brings a powerful blend of scientific acumen and institutional leadership. During her tenure as the 17th Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), she led high-impact efforts including the PROSPECT-Lung trial and the Early-Onset Cancer Initiative. A physician-scientist with more than 300 peer-reviewed publications, she has been honored with the American Cancer Society Medal of Honor and elected to both the National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Reflecting on her appointment, Dr. Rathmell commented: "The CEO Roundtable has demonstrated how public-private partnerships can create lasting change. I look forward to advancing efforts that connect discovery to real-world patient benefit."

Dr. Sunil Verma's distinguished career has profoundly shaped academic oncology, drug development, and cancer care. Prior to joining AstraZeneca in 2019, he held prominent academic

positions, including head of the Cancer Center and Department of Oncology, where he spearheaded groundbreaking Phase III breast cancer trials. These trials, published in prestigious journals like *The Lancet* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*, have transformed global cancer care. At AstraZeneca, Dr. Verma has been a visionary leader, driving pioneering advancements in precision medicine and antibody-drug conjugate development, significantly contributing to the company's global oncology efforts. "The Council embodies the pinnacle of oncology R&D: collaborative, ambitious, and relentlessly focused on transformative impact," said Dr. Verma. "I am thrilled to contribute to this mission of accelerating therapeutic innovation."

### Advancing a Collaborative Model for Oncology R&D

Since its launch in 2005, the Life Sciences Council has played a key role in shaping the ecosystem of cancer research. Among its early accomplishments was the development of the START Clauses, standardized clinical trial agreement terms co-created with the NCI, which dramatically shortened contracting timelines and Intellectual Property management across trial sites. The Council has also supported harmonized safety reporting, structured precompetitive research frameworks, and led multistakeholder initiatives to reduce inefficiencies and accelerate progress.

The Council also played a catalytic role in the launch of Project Data Sphere® (PDS) in 2014. As an independent subsidiary of the CEO Roundtable on Cancer, PDS provides a robust and secure platform for sharing de-identified, patient-level clinical trial data. It operates through a dual-access model—supporting both open-access research and closed-access, precompetitive collaboration—enabling broad scientific exploration while safeguarding proprietary interests.

With a data repository that has encompassed more than 252 clinical trials and over 250,000 patient records, PDS has become a vital engine for oncology research, powering advances that influence clinical practice, regulatory decision-making, health policy, and trial design. Its collaborative infrastructure has enabled breakthrough initiatives such as the Prostate Cancer DREAM Challenge, which produced a novel prognostic biomarker that outperformed existing standards. PDS also supports a wide range of ongoing projects in areas such as immunotherapy safety reporting, rare cancer data integration, and comparative effectiveness research.

In recent years, PDS has become a leading force in applying artificial intelligence to oncology research. Among its flagship initiatives is autoRECIST, launched in 2019, which is focused on automating tumor response assessment to enhance consistency and reproducibility in clinical trials. Another key effort is the Total Tumor Burden Index (TTBI), a novel deep learning-based model for delivering quantitative, volumetric assessments of tumor burden as a comprehensive and biologically meaningful alternative to traditional RECIST measurements.

### Looking Ahead

Drs. Rathmell and Verma join a highly regarded group of leaders on the Life Sciences Council.

Current members include Eliav Barr, MD (Senior Vice President, Head of Global Clinical Development and Chief Medical Officer at Merck), Stu Bailey, DPhil (Senior Vice President, EMD Serono), and Leanne Oh, MS (Vice President, Ascenta Capital).

The Council's alumni include several of oncology's most respected leaders, such as Mace Rothenberg, MD (former Chief Medical Officer, Pfizer), Monica Bertagnolli, MD (former Director of the National Cancer Institute and National Institutes of Health), Maria Rivas, MD (former Chief Medical Officer, EMD Serono), Gideon Blumenthal, MD (former Deputy Director of the Oncology Center of Excellence, FDA), Brian Alexander, MD (CEO, Valo Health), and Craig Tendler, MD (former VP, Oncology Clinical Development, Johnson and Johnson).

Their appointments reinforce the Roundtable's commitment to driving data-driven, collaborative progress in cancer research. As the Council continues to advance strategic initiatives at the intersection of science, technology, and policy, these new voices bring vital expertise and renewed momentum.

Sean Khozin, MD, MPH, CEO of the CEO Roundtable on Cancer, emphasized the strategic context: "As cancer research becomes increasingly defined by technology, data science, and the ability to coordinate across fragmented systems, the Roundtable is committed to building the connective infrastructure that drives measurable impact. The addition of Drs. Rathmell and Verma enhances our ability to execute on that vision—by bringing scientific excellence into direct alignment with systems-level innovation."

### About CEO Roundtable on Cancer

The CEO Roundtable on Cancer, Inc. is a nonprofit coalition founded in 2001 after President George H. W. Bush challenged corporate leaders to "do something bold and venturesome about cancer." The organization unites executives from biopharmaceuticals, biotechnology, federal agencies, and academia around a shared mission to reduce cancer risk, accelerate early detection, broaden access to high-quality care and clinical trials, and drive the development of lifesaving therapies. Through strategic partnerships with federal and community networks, the Roundtable works to dismantle systemic barriers and expand clinical trial participation across all communities.

### About Project Data Sphere

Project Data Sphere® is an independent nonprofit organization launched in 2014 by the CEO Roundtable on Cancer. The organization provides free, open access to de-identified, patient-level data from completed oncology clinical trials contributed by industry, academia, and government partners. This collaborative approach helps advance cancer research while eliminating longstanding data silos that have historically hindered scientific progress. Project Data Sphere also leads pre-competitive multi-stakeholder collaborations that harness artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance tumor measurement, outcome prediction, and clinical trial

design.

For more information, visit [www.ceort.org](http://www.ceort.org).

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