Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to share great news: this morning, two American Cancer Society-funded researchers were awarded the most prestigious honor in science, the Nobel Prize. Gregg L. Semenza, MD, PhD, of Johns Hopkins University, and William G. Kaelin, Jr., MD, of Harvard Medical School and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, are two of three scientists receiving the 2019 Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology. They are the 48th and 49th ACS-funded researchers to earn the title of Nobel laureate.

Drs. Semenza and Kaelin discovered how cells can sense and adapt to changing oxygen availability. They identified molecular machinery that regulates the activity of genes in response to varying levels of oxygen. The seminal discoveries by this year’s Nobel laureates revealed the mechanism for one of life’s most essential adaptive processes. They established the basis for our understanding of how oxygen levels affect cellular metabolism and physiological function. Their work has already had a significant impact on our understanding of how cancer cells thrive and has helped establish new treatment strategies. Their discoveries have also paved the way for promising new strategies to fight anemia, cancer, and many other diseases.

Dr. Semenza received his first ACS grant in 2012 and is currently an ACS Research Professor, the most prestigious research grant made by our national program. The grant provides support for 10 years to study the role of hypoxia-inducible factor 1 in breast cancer metastasis.

Dr. Kaelin received a one-year ACS Clinical Oncology Fellowship in 1987 while at Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

This is an incredible accomplishment for our organization and our mission to attack cancer from every angle. I hope you are as proud as I am of this latest accolade for our groundbreaking research program, which does so much to help save lives from this disease. No other nonprofit organization has come close to funding as many Nobel laureates as your American Cancer Society – a distinction that only drives us to push that number even higher.

I invite you to celebrate this exciting news with the American Cancer Society.

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