

Richard Gilbertson

Gilbertson is currently Scientific Director, Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center and holds the Lillian R. Cannon endowed Chair at St Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. At St Jude, he has led international efforts that have dramatically advanced understanding of the biology of several common childhood brain tumours.

His research has included innovative clinical trials that have translated this understanding into new therapies. He trained as a paediatric oncologist at Newcastle University before completing his PhD. He joined St Jude in 2000 where he has served as Director of the hospital's Molecular Clinical Trials Core, Director of the Division of Brain Tumour Research and co-leader of the Neurobiology and Brain Tumour Program.

Professor Patrick Maxwell, Regius Professor of Medicine at the University of Cambridge, said: "We are really delighted to appoint a clinician scientist of Richard's calibre. He joins us at an exciting time for both the Cambridge Cancer Centre and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, the centrepiece of the largest biotech cluster outside the United States.

"Richard will replace Professor Bruce Ponder, whose exemplary leadership has placed the Cambridge Cancer Centre in an extremely strong position. Richard will build on this, playing a key role in strengthening relationships between academia and industry which we believe will revolutionise the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients worldwide."

"It is both exciting and a privilege to return home to England and join Cambridge University to serve as Director of the Cancer Center," said Professor Gilbertson. "Cambridge is an amazing research environment with world class laboratory and clinical cancer researchers. I very much look forward to working with them as together we generate the next generation of impactful cancer therapies."

The Cambridge Cancer Centre, a partnership between University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Cancer Research UK, was established in 2005 as a dynamic collaboration of researchers, clinicians, and the pharmaceutical and biotech industries based in the Cambridge area. The membership of the Centre includes over 150 scientific principal investigators and senior investigators as well as over 90 NHS consultants who are engaged in cancer related clinical or translational research across a number of institutes and departments.

The Centre combines world-class science and technology with excellent patient care to pioneer new ways to prevent, detect and treat cancer. By working together across different disciplines, it aims to break down the barriers between the laboratory and the clinic, enabling patients to benefit from the latest innovations in cancer science.

Keith McNeil, Chief Executive of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, one of the key partners in the Cambridge Cancer Centre, adds: "It is great news that Professor Gilbertson is joining the Cambridge Cancer Centre as its new director. Cancer is one of our major areas of focus here at the Trust and we have some of the best patient outcomes in the world. The reason for this is because of the close collaboration between the University, Cancer Research UK and other partners. Many of our staff work across these well-known organisations, which means the high-quality cancer care that we provide to patients is underpinned by leading research.

"With new therapies coming forward all the time cancer is now a treatable condition rather than a fatal disease. We know that there are different types of cancer, which can exist in a single tumour, and our focus now is on identifying these using DNA sequencing, and targeting treatment with drugs

for each cancer type. Here in Cambridge we are one of the leading centres worldwide and with AstraZeneca moving here soon, we will be able to make even greater strides in medical advancement to benefit patients locally and globally.”

Professor Gilbertson will also take up the post of Senior Group Leader in the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Cambridge Institute.

Dr Iain Foulkes, Cancer Research UK’s director for research , said: “Professor Gilbertson’s appointment is a real coup for the UK and a great benefit to Cancer Research UK’s strategy to drive more research in to brain cancer. The partnership between Cambridge University, Cancer Research UK and the NHS has made this recruitment possible and his world-class reputation in childhood brain tumour research makes him the ideal choice for driving much-needed progress for patients. As a charity, we want to drive a reverse ‘brain drain’ and bring the very best minds to work on the big problems in cancer research here in the UK – Professor Gilbertson’s appointment is another sign we are achieving this.”

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