Drs. Bernard Fisher and Norman Wolmark to receive Society of Surgical Oncology’s 2018 Charles M. Balch, MD Distinguished Service Award

Pittsburgh, PA — Bernard Fisher, MD, Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, and Norman Wolmark, MD, NRG Oncology Group Chair, received the 2018 Distinguished Service Award from the Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO) on March 23 during the organization’s 71st Annual Cancer Symposium at McCormick Place Lakeside Center in Chicago, IL. Dr. Wolmark accepted the award on behalf of Dr. Fisher and himself from Dr. Jeffrey A. Drebin, SSO Past President.

Dr. Fisher is past chairman of the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP). In the late 1960s, clinical trials of the NSABP revealed total mastectomy to be as effective as radical mastectomy in improving survival in breast cancer patients; subsequent NSABP studies showed lumpectomy to be as effective as total mastectomy in increasing survival. Dr. Fisher was an investigator at the forefront of promoting clinical trials in research long before they came into common use.

Dr. Wolmark, chairman of the NSABP Foundation, has overseen the design and implementation of the group’s breast cancer clinical trials since 1994. He is currently Professor of Surgery at Drexel University School of Medicine, Group Chair of NRG Oncology, and a member of the faculty of the Division of Breast Surgical Oncology at the Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Joan (Kip) Goldberg, MPH, CEO of the NSABP Foundation, noted that “Drs. Fisher and Wolmark are truly deserving of this Distinguished Service Award; their work with clinical trials and research into the biology and treatment of breast and colorectal cancer over the years has led to practice-changing and groundbreaking advances in both local-regional and systemic treatments for cancer patients. They have always kept a focus on improving patient care and have offered compassionate and skilled care as clinicians."

The Charles M. Balch, MD Distinguished Service Award is presented for outstanding contributions to surgical oncology through service to SSO, research, or enhancing clinical care or health policy. Charles M. Balch, MD has dedicated more than 30 years of service to the SSO, demonstrating leadership on multiple fronts and serving as SSO President in 1991.

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NRG Oncology is a federally funded clinical trials group that conducts practice-changing, multi-institutional clinical and translational research to improve the lives of patients with cancer. The group’s extensive research organization includes more than 1,300 research sites located worldwide, with predominance in the United States and Canada.