

# The Gustav O. Lienhard Award

## 2016 Honoree

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### David Cella, PhD

Ralph Seal Paffenbarger Professor  
Chair, Department of Medical Social Sciences  
Director, Center for Patient-Centered Outcomes,  
Institute for Public Health and Medicine  
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine



For his pioneering work to measure and apply patient-reported outcomes in health care, the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) awarded the 2016 Gustav O. Lienhard Award to David Cella, PhD, of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The award, which recognizes Dr. Cella's achievements with a medal and \$40,000, was presented to him at the NAM's 46th Annual Meeting on October 17, 2016, in Washington, DC.

"Dr. Cella's trailblazing work in investigating what matters to people seeking health care has paved the way for a better, more patient-centered approach," said NAM President Victor J. Dzau.

During his career, Dr. Cella has made transformational contributions toward understanding what aspects of life matter most to people struggling with health conditions and measuring those aspects so that the information can be used to guide care. In 1985, he conducted in-depth interviews with cancer patients in order to develop questionnaires that could shed light on how cancer therapeutics were affecting patients' lives, at a time when it was uncommon in oncology to ask patients how they were feeling. His efforts helped usher in an era in which it is common practice to include patient stakeholders both in the development of quality-of-life questionnaires and in the more general conduct of research and clinical care.

In addition, Dr. Cella was the first researcher to pioneer the use of item response theory (IRT) in health measurement, opening up new possibilities for accurately gauging patients' symptoms, functioning, and perceptions of health and well-being. He also developed a score-linking approach that enabled comparisons of multiple patient-reported outcomes, unifying the measurement field around common metrics. Today, multiple health systems and facilities caring for millions of people use tools and measures developed by Dr. Cella and his close collaborators.

Dr. Cella is the 31st recipient of the Lienhard Award. Given annually, the award recognizes outstanding national achievement in improving personal health care in the United States. Nominees are eligible for consideration without regard to education or profession, and award recipients are selected by a committee of experts convened by the Academy. The 2016 selection committee was chaired by David Blumenthal, president of the Commonwealth Fund.



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

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**The Gustav O. Lienhard Award**, established in 1986 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), honors outstanding achievement in improving personal health care services in the United States. The award is named after Gustav O. Lienhard, who served as chair of RWJF's board of trustees from 1971 to 1986—a period in which RWJF emerged as a national leader of philanthropy in health care. During his tenure, grants totaling two-thirds of a billion dollars were made to improve the health of the American people.

Each year, a selection committee appointed by the National Academy of Medicine selects an honoree whose work reflects the ideals and commitment of Mr. Lienhard and RWJF. Nominees are judged on the innovation of their achievements, the impact of their work, and their success in overcoming barriers to change in the health care system. The award is accompanied by a medal and \$40,000.

## Past Recipients

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- 2015**  
**Robert L. Brent, MD, PhD**  
Thomas Jefferson University and Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children
- 2014**  
**Linda Aiken, PhD, RN**  
University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing
- 2013**  
**Steven A. Schroeder, MD**  
University of California, San Francisco
- 2012**  
**Donald M. Berwick, MD**  
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
- 2011**  
**Jerold F. Lucey, MD**  
University of Vermont College of Medicine
- 2010**  
**Joseph A. Califano, Jr., LLB**  
Columbia University
- 2009**  
**Thomas E. Starzl, MD, PhD**  
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- 2008**  
**John E. Wennberg, MD, MPH**  
Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice
- 2007**  
**Howard H. Hiatt, MD**  
Harvard Medical School
- 2006**  
**Aaron T. Beck, MD**  
Beck Institute for Cognitive Therapy and Research
- 2005**  
**Robert H. Brook, MD, ScD**  
University of California, Los Angeles
- 2004**  
**Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, MPH**  
National Quality Forum
- 2003**  
**B. Jaye Anno, PhD**  
*and*  
**Bernard P. Harrison, JD**  
National Commission on Correctional Health Care
- 2002**  
**Kathryn E. Barnard, PhD, RN**  
University of Washington  
*and*  
**T. Berry Brazelton, MD**  
Brazelton Foundation, Inc.
- 2001**  
**Ruth Watson Lubic, RN, CNM, EdD**  
District of Columbia Developing Families Center
- 2000**  
**Philip R. Lee, MD**  
University of California, San Francisco
- 1999**  
**Elma L. Holder, MSPH**  
National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform
- 1998**  
**H. Jack Geiger, MD**  
City University of New York Medical School
- 1997**  
**Lester Breslow, MD, MPH**  
University of California, Los Angeles
- 1996**  
**Robert N. Butler, MD**  
Mount Sinai School of Medicine  
*and*  
**T. Franklin Williams, MD**  
University of Rochester School of Medicine
- 1995**  
**Lawrence L. Weed, MD**  
University of Vermont
- 1994**  
**Byllye Y. Avery**  
National Black Women's Health Project
- 1993**  
**David E. Rogers, MD**  
Cornell University Medical College
- 1992**  
**C. Everett Loop, MD, ScD**  
Dartmouth Medical School  
*and*  
**Faye G. Abdellah, EdD, ScD, RN**  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
- 1991**  
**Robert M. Ball, MA**  
National Academy of Social Insurance
- 1990**  
**Henry K. Silver, MD**  
University of Colorado Health Sciences Center  
*and*  
**Loretta C. Ford, EdD, RN**  
University of Rochester
- 1989**  
**Robert J. Haggerty, MD**  
William T. Grant Foundation
- 1988**  
**Marie-Louis Ansak**  
On Lok Senior Health Services
- 1987**  
**Ernest W. Saward, MD**  
University of Rochester Medical Center
- 1986**  
**Julius B. Richmond, MD**  
Harvard University