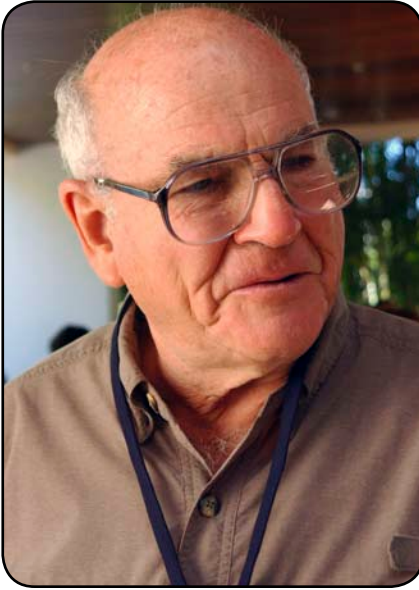


# CSC/SETI Institute Trustees Colloquium



## Baruch S. Blumberg

**Senior Advisor to the President,  
Fox Chase Cancer Center  
Member, SETI Institute Board of Trustees**

**Wednesday, Feb. 20, 12:00 noon  
The SETI Institute, Europa room**

**Hepatitis B Virus.  
Discovery, the Present, and the Future.**

The Trustees of SETI have interesting and varied careers in addition to their activities with the Institute. This is the first in a series of presentations to be given by Board members on their work.

Hepatitis B virus was discovered as a result of a basic science project on inherited biochemical variation related to disease susceptibility. It was not, initially, directed to the discovery of hepatitis B virus (HBV), the development of a vaccine, and the prevention of a common cancer. It is an example of non-targeted basic research leading to important clinical and business outcomes.

HBV is one of the most common and deadly viruses. About 400 million people worldwide are currently infected. Infection can lead to acute disease, chronic hepatitis, and primary cancer of the liver. The vaccine was invented in 1969 using an unusual process in which the vaccine protein was isolated from the blood of HBV carriers. It is now one of the most widely used vaccines worldwide and has resulted in a striking decrease in infection and in a reduction in the incidence of liver cancer. It is the first cancer prevention vaccine and has encouraged the development of another vaccine to prevent cancer of the cervix. It is also possible to greatly decrease the risk of cancer and life-shortening chronic liver disease by the use of antivirals. There are likely to be many cancers that can be prevented and/or treated in a similar manner that could, in time, greatly decrease the burden of human cancer.

The virus also has non-pathological effects; the ratio of males to females among offspring is related in a complex manner to the response of parents to infection with HBV.



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