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## **Johann-Georg-Zimmermann Medal for Axel Ullrich**

**Axel Ullrich, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Molecular Biology at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried has been awarded the Johann-Georg-Zimmermann Medal for his services in the field of cancer research. For more than 40 years the award, sponsored by Deutsche Hypothekenbank AG, has recognized outstanding scientists in the field of cancer research. The MHH<sup>plus</sup> Foundation will present the award at Hannover Medical School on 6 February 2017.**

Axel Ullrich is one of the world's leading scientists in the field of signal transduction in cancer cells, and a pioneer in the development of targeted cancer therapies. Errors in communication between cells have fatal consequences: all cancers and many other diseases arise because of faulty cell signalling. Together with his team, the molecular biologist has investigated the complex signalling system by means of which information is passed from the surface to the interior of cells. Ullrich's findings formed, for example, the basis for the development of herceptin: the first specific anticancer drug that interferes with the cellular signal chain in breast cancer cells but leaves healthy cells unaffected. The 73-year-old studied biochemistry in Tübingen and attended the University of California as a postdoctoral student in 1975. In 1979 he decided to dedicate himself to application-oriented research and moved to the world's first biotechnology company in San Francisco. There he established a research programme to study the molecular biology of growth factors and their receptors – crucial components for cellular communication. Starting in 1988 he conducted research at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry, where he remained for almost 30 years. "I'm thrilled about the prize," Axel Ullrich says. "We've always tried to set new standards with our research and to find practical solutions for the benefit of many."



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