

Black Marylanders to Watch 2025: Dr. Taofeek Kunle Owonikoko, UMMC cancer center director

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Dr. Taofeek Owonikoko is the executive director of the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Since taking the helm as executive director of the [University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) in Baltimore one year ago, Dr. Taofeek Kunle Owonikoko has continued to care for patients as he completes a host of research and administrative duties.

“I actually don’t consider it a choice,” he said. “I consider it more of a requirement and a responsibility, because at the end of the day, why do we exist? To improve the outcome and the luck for our patients.”

Owonikoko is a thoracic oncologist, but as executive director of the center, his goal is to bring lab research to bear in clinical trials.

“We want to look at [the studies] from the prism of: How do they impact the patient in front of us today, tomorrow and next year?” he said.

Currently, the center is enrolling small-cell lung cancer patients in a clinical trial for a pill that might slow the disease, Owonikoko said.

“It came out of the work done in my lab, where we identified a new class of drugs that can be administered by mouth instead of IV,” he said.

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