Dear Friend,

I find it hard to believe that the end of March is just around the corner. The first quarter of the year has flown by quickly - no doubt due to the projects we're tackling and progress we're making. The Melanoma Research Foundation's CURE OM initiative is partnering with some of the world's best researchers and scientists to make incredible improvements for people impacted with ocular melanoma (OM). But before we start looking too far ahead, we need to acknowledge the strides made in 2012 since the MRF established CURE OM in late 2011.

In our first year, we have raised $800,000 for ocular melanoma research! We had our first CURE OM research grant cycle and awarded two Established Investigator Awards ($200,000 each) to two world renowned scientists. Our second grant cycle is now open and we are accepting proposals for both Established Investigator Awards, as well as Career Development Awards.

In May 2012, CURE OM held its first bi-annual Scientific Meeting. The meeting convened leading international and interdisciplinary researchers and clinicians to share information about the latest findings in ocular (uveal) melanoma diagnosis and treatment, and build strategy based on partnerships and collaborations that can more quickly move research forward. Also in 2012, CURE OM hosted our first annual patient and caregiver symposium at Thomas Jefferson University/Kimmel Cancer Center. We provided the patient community with expanded educational resources, including two webinars that focused on the latest OM news and treatment options. We also established relationships with people impacted by the disease by hosting informal "Meet & Greets" across the nation.

In this issue of the quarterly Eye on OM e-newsletter, the first of

March 2013

Now Accepting Research Grant Applications!

The CURE OM grant cycle is aligned with the general MRF cycle - applications are being accepted until May 1, 2013.

Click here for the 2013 Request for Proposals. Email cureom@melanoma.org with questions.

Keep an Eye On OM - Join Our Mailing List

Become Involved Today!

Support CURE OM

CURE OM Magnets

CURE OM volunteer, Linda O'Brien, is hosting an
2013, you'll get a glimpse of how we've already begun to leverage the momentum from 2012 to pave the way toward a groundbreaking year for OM. Keep up to date on the latest OM research updates and news by following the MRF’s CURE OM on Twitter, liking our Facebook page and visiting www.cureom.org. Together, we will find a CURE for OM!

Sincerely,

Sara M. Selig, M.D.
Director, CURE OM

Ocular Melanoma Research Grants

The MRF’s first CURE OM research grant cycle is complete! Just in the first year accepting OM research applications, the MRF received 19 proposals from all over the world to delve into ocular melanoma research. A rigorous peer-reviewed process (the first specific to OM!) spearheaded by CURE OM’s renowned Scientific Steering Committee narrowed the applications to the top six. After review from a second expert panel, the two most promising grants were chosen for funding.

The following proposals will be funded for $200,000 over two years:

- Levi Garraway, MD, PhD, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Title: Dissecting therapeutic avenues in UM through genomic and functional studies
- John Sondek, PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Title: Interdiction of signaling by G-alpha-q to treat ocular melanoma

To learn more, read the MRF’s official press release. The next CURE OM grant cycle is aligned with the general MRF cycle -- proposals are being accepted until May 1, 2013. Click here for more information about the research CURE OM is funding.

CURE OM Patient and Caregiver Meeting Recap

The 2nd annual CURE OM patient and caregiver symposium, Eyes on a Cure, was a great success! The symposium took place from March 2-3 at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX. Patients, caregivers, physicians and social workers learned about the latest in OM research and treatment news, as well as participated in small group sessions geared toward providing effective coping mechanisms and support.

Upcoming Events

CURE OM will be represented at a number of upcoming events where you can show your support. Hope to see you there!

4/9 - Wings of Hope for Melanoma Gala
(Denver, CO)

5/4 - 2nd Annual Miles for Melanoma at Universal Studios 5K Run/Walk
(Hollywood, CA)

5/5 - Sarah Smith in the Rev3 Aquabike Event
(Knoxville, TN)

5/9 - CURE OM Educational Webinar, Liver Directed Therapies

5/11 - Educational Symposium
(Seattle, WA)

5/14 - 3rd Annual Legislative Hill Day
(Washington, DC)

5/16 - Wings of Hope for Melanoma Gala
The meeting opened with a welcome from Dr. Patrick Hwu, the Chair of the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology at M.D. Anderson, as well as a personal welcome from the MRF's CURE OM Director, Dr. Sara Selig. Dr. Dan Gombos and Dr. Tara McCannel (from UCLA) discussed treatment of the primary eye tumor and other basics of OM and genetic mutations. From there, Drs. Sapna Patel, Patrick Hwu and David Hong discussed systemic treatments in the adjuvant and metastatic settings. Drs. Scott Woodman and Beta Esmaeili spoke about latest advancements and understanding treatment of OM. Drs. Sanjay Gupta, Beth Beadle, Alda Tam and Richard Royal updated the group on news related to liver directed therapies and local therapies for metastatic disease.

Many thanks to the patients and caregivers who shared their personal stories during the meeting, including former Louisiana Governor Kathleen B. Blanco, and to the physicians and researchers for participating in this important two-day meeting! Thank you also to the team of M.D. Anderson social workers and mind/body practitioners for their participation.

Recordings from the symposium will be posted on www.cureom.org as soon as they are available. In the meantime, check out photos from the symposium on the CURE OM Facebook page.

The next MRF CURE OM Eyes on a Cure: Patient and Caregiver Symposium will be held at the Jules Stein Eye Institute in Los Angeles, CA in Spring 2014. Please keep an eye on the CURE OM website and Facebook page as the date will be announced soon.

CURE OM's International Footprint

As part of its growth, the MRF's CURE OM initiative is expanding its footprint internationally. In February 2013, Dr. Sara Selig was invited by the University of Liverpool's Ocular Oncology Centre to spend a week in the UK observing their clinical and research activities. The UK team wanted to tap into Sara's unique experience as both a doctor and wife of an ocular melanoma patient. During Sara's visit, she observed all aspects of clinical care, led by Professor Bertil Damato. Professor Damato and his team sought Sara's insight into what they were doing well and where they have room for improvement. Sara also visited the paired research team at University of Liverpool, led by Professor Sarah Coupland. Sara's positive impressions of the talented and patient-centered team were delivered at an (San Francisco, CA)

5/17 - Educational Symposium
(Philadelphia, PA)

5/18 - Educational Symposium - Mayo Clinic
(Rochester, MN)

5/19 - Miles for Melanoma 5K Run/Walk
(Washington, DC)

Want to know more? Visit CURE OM's list of upcoming events.

About CURE OM

Committed to the support of medical research to find effective treatments and eventually a cure for ocular melanoma, CURE OM also educates patients and physicians about prevention, diagnosis and the treatment of ocular melanoma.

CURE OM actively advocates for the ocular melanoma community, helping to raise awareness of this disease and the need for accelerating research. Our patient-driven discussion forum provides a space for members to share and receive support.

Want to find out more? Check us out at www.cureom.org.

Find CURE OM Online:
interdisciplinary conference at the end of the week geared toward healthcare professionals treating OM.

Also during her trip to the UK, Sara was asked to speak at OcuMelUK’s patient and caregiver meeting. Sara delivered a talk entitled, "Turning Personal Struggle into an International Fight Against Ocular Melanoma." Click here for a recording.

The CURE OM team is grateful for the opportunity to work with the University of Liverpool and OcuMelUK, and looks forward to more international collaboration in the future!

Educational Program

The MRF’s CURE OM is committed to continuing its educational series for people affected by OM beyond our annual Eyes on a Cure meeting, including a series of informative webinars throughout the year. Like the Eyes on a Cure symposium, the webinars are free to participants. In late 2012, CURE OM hosted the most recent webinar titled Systemic Therapies For Ocular Melanoma. Dr. Jeffrey Weber from Moffitt Cancer Center and Dr. Keith Flaherty from Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center provided participants with the latest information about treatment options and advances in research. If you missed this webinar, you can click here to watch a recording.

The next webinar, Liver Directed Therapies, will take place on May 9 from 4-5pm ET. Don't forget to register! Email cureom@melanoma.org with questions. You can find regular updates about the educational webinars by following the MRF’s CURE OM on Twitter and liking the Facebook page!

OM News

Ocular melanoma continues to get attention in the national and medical trade media. William Harbour, M.D., ophthalmologist at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Co-Chair of CURE OM’s Scientific Steering Committee, identified a new genetic marker for determining the likelihood OM will metastasize.
Lindsay Eberts, daughter of Oscar-nominated Hollywood filmmaker, Jake Eberts (who died from OM in 2012), wrote an article about her experience with her father's disease and the Academy Awards.

Castle Biosciences Inc., a developer of prognostic tests for rare cancers, created a website about uveal melanoma with the goal of raising awareness of the disease. CURE OM is featured on the website's Resources page.

"Bascom Palmer Researcher Identifies New Genetic Mutation in Ocular Melanoma," HealthCanal.com

"Aggressive surveillance questionable for eye melanoma recurrence," News-Medical.net

"Focusing On Eye Melanoma," WFTV.com

"Why You Dont Want To Go To The Oscars," Lindsay's Kitchen Workshop.com

"The 85th Academy Awards Failed to Honor a Legend," Huffington Post

"Website Dedicated To Sufferers Of Most Common Form Of Eye Cancer," PR Newswire