CURE OM's Three-Year Anniversary: Reflecting Back and Looking Forward

Dear Friend,

As we approach the end of the year and the season of gratitude, I can’t help but pause and reflect on all for which I am thankful. At the top of my list is the wonderful addition to my family – my beautiful, healthy baby girl. Closely on the heels of my love for baby G and our family is my colossal gratitude for the strong and vibrant ocular melanoma (OM) community. It is a community none of us chose to be a part of, yet, it is a community of strength, support and commitment to improving the lives of people affected by this disease, myself included.

We are OM patients, researchers, caregivers and more. Each of us have a different and unique battle with this disease, yet together we create unflinching support for one another in the OM community. The staff working behind the scenes at the MRF are grateful for each of you and the extraordinary efforts you make to combat OM. Your efforts - whether you are educating others about OM, advocating for greater awareness, hosting fundraisers that support CURE OM’s research grants, or providing support and friendship to the newly diagnosed – amplify the community’s efforts to attack OM from every angle. Thank you for all that you give to the OM community.

Together we can, and must, magnify these efforts to move OM research forward in 2015. We must not miss the opportunity to push things to the next level. Thank you for joining the MRF and CURE OM as we make this push - and make even greater strides toward supporting the OM scientific and patient communities and toward a cure.

With gratitude,

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

P.S. To make sure we are expanding CURE OM’s efforts in the right direction, we are developing a survey aimed to get your input and opinions. This survey will help identify the still unmet needs of the OM community, which will then inform CURE OM’s programs in 2015. You will receive an email in December with a link to this survey, and I hope you’ll share your honest feedback with us so we can work to better serve you and others impacted by this disease.

CURE OM’s Three-Year Anniversary

This past October marks three years since the CURE OM initiative was founded. Over the past three years, CURE OM has made great strides in advancing the ocular melanoma field.

On the patient and caregiver front, since its founding in 2011, CURE OM has established robust education and support resources for patients and family members, including the Phone Buddy support program, OM online discussion forum, quarterly educational webinars, online resources for finding an OM physician, suggested questions to ask your doctor, factsheets, brochures, quarterly e-newsletters, and, of course, the annual in-person Eyes on a Cure Patient and Caregiver meeting at which an international group of OM patients and their supporters convene to learn, share, support and network.

On the scientific side, CURE OM has awarded over $1 million dollars in OM-specific research grants, facilitated new collaborations among physicians and researchers through its bi-annual scientific meetings, and established meaningful partnerships with organizations such as the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the Society for Melanoma Research (SMR) to make sure OM is front and center of melanoma research.

CURE OM & 2014

2014 alone brought about many exciting accomplishments in the OM field and CURE OM remains at the forefront of this progress. CURE OM is leading a group of OM experts to publishing the first-ever OM treatment guidelines, which will be published in early 2015.

As a result of one of the international and interdisciplinary meetings spearheaded by CURE OM, the NCI and SMR in 2013, an article, titled “Biology of Advanced Uveal Melanoma and Next Steps for Clinical Therapeutics,” was published late 2014 in the journal Pigment Cell and Melanoma Research. This article can be read [here](#).

Also in partnership with the NCI, CURE OM advocated to include ocular melanoma in the important work of The Cancer Genome Atlas project in 2014. This project is now well underway – all samples have been collected by the NCI and data is being collected and analyzed. The data generated by
the TCGA project will be widely used by the OM and larger cancer communities.

This past year CURE OM expanded its OM Patient and Caregiver Symposium, *Eyes on a Cure*, to the west coast. This meeting reached OM patients that may not have been able to travel to the *Eyes on a Cure* meetings on the east coast.

The CURE OM initiative continues to push the envelope forward to bring new and innovative educational resources to the OM community and greater support for the medical and research community. CURE OM remains committed and focused to help bring better treatments and, ultimately, a cure for those impacted by this disease.

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**Help Fight OM Through Year-End Giving**

CURE OM relies heavily on donations to provide much of its educational, support and research programming. Donations to the MRF’s CURE OM initiative make it possible for CURE OM to provide the resources listed above free of charge to the OM community. Donations help support OM-specific research funding that continues to push the field closer to finding a cure.

As the season of giving approaches, please consider giving a gift to support the efforts of CURE OM. The MRF has the highest rating from Charity Navigator, demonstrating the organization is careful with your dollars. According to Charity Navigator, a four-star rating indicates an organization “exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its Cause.” Your support will help keep CURE OM growing its support for OM patients, caregivers and research. Thank you for considering the MRF’s CURE OM initiative in your year-end giving. If you’d like to make a donation to the MRF’s CURE OM initiative, please [click here](#) and select “My donation is for CURE OM.”

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**Ocular Melanoma in the News**

Below is a sampling of recent ocular melanoma news and articles.

"**Mystery Shrouds Possible Eye Cancer Cluster in Huntersville,**" WSOCTV.com

"**Research Shows Cure For Posterior Uveal Melanoma Not Far From Reach,**" *Ophthalmology Times*

"**Brave Sheffield Mum Loses Cancer Battle,**" The Star

"**Biology of Advanced Uveal Melanoma And Next Steps For Clinical Therapeutics,**" *Pigment Cell & Melanoma Research*

"**Can You Handle The Truth About Melanoma?**" ChicagoNow.com

"**Darwen Women Pass Stamina Test For Eye Cancer Victim,**" The Citizen"