

WASHINGTON, DC – The [Melanoma Research Alliance](#) (MRA) and the [Melanoma Research Foundation](#) (MRF) commend the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for including \$10 million in dedicated melanoma research funding in the Conference Agreement on the FY2019 Defense Appropriations bill, H.R. 6157. This \$10 million line item is the first time melanoma research will receive dedicated Department of Defense (DOD) funding and represents a historic moment for the melanoma community. As the leading nonprofit funders of pioneering melanoma science, the MRA and the MRF welcome this new commitment to advance the field of melanoma research.

Since 2009, melanoma has been eligible to receive Defense funding through the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). While conditions like breast cancer and lung cancer benefitted from dedicated funding during this time, melanoma researchers were in competition with over a dozen other cancer types to secure a portion of PRCRP funding. The recommendations of the 2019 Defense Appropriations bill will accelerate the pace of progress and ensure that melanoma research becomes a national priority.

In making their recommendation, the Appropriations Committee recognized that the high incidence of melanoma among members of the military warrants the need for a separate line item for Defense-funded melanoma research. According to the online journal of the military's own medical school, the Uniformed Services University, "melanoma is the most significant cancer to affect the active duty military population."

"We applaud Congress for their decision to create a separate line item for DOD funded melanoma research," said Kyleigh LiPira, MBA, Chief Executive Officer of the MRF. "Melanoma is the second most frequent diagnosis among active duty servicemembers, for both males and females, and those rates only increase in members age 50 and beyond."

MRA CEO, Michael Kaplan, shared similar enthusiasm, noting, "not only is this a huge need for those that serve our country, but the benefits of research on melanoma can also pay dividends for so many other cancers." Kaplan continued, "in fact, checkpoint immunotherapies first approved for melanoma in the last decade have since been approved as treatment options for many other cancers, demonstrating a ripple effect of melanoma research across oncology."

With the Conference Agreement concluded, H.R. 6157 will now be considered by the full Senate this week. Following Senate approval, the House of Representatives is expected to consider this legislation during the week of September 24. House and Senate leadership have expressed their intent to send the bill to the President by September 30.

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### **About Melanoma**

Melanoma is one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States and can strike men and women of all ages, races and skin types. In 2018, approximately 91,000 Americans are expected to be diagnosed with Stage I-IV melanoma and another 87,000 will be diagnosed with melanoma in situ – totaling nearly 178,000 total diagnoses. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25- to 29-years-old and the second most common cancer in adolescents and young adults 15- to 29-years-old.

The majority of melanomas occur on the skin and melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Melanoma can also occur in the eye (ocular, or uveal melanoma), in mucous membranes (mucosal melanoma), or even beneath fingernails or toenails.

#### **About the Melanoma Research Alliance**

MRA is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research and has awarded more than \$101 million and leveraged an additional \$101 million, to research seeking to better prevent, diagnose and treat melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, 100 percent of every dollar MRA raises goes directly to melanoma research. MRA's ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations and corporations. Visit [www.CureMelanoma.org](http://www.CureMelanoma.org) for more information, or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

#### **About the Melanoma Research Foundation**

The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is the largest independent organization devoted to melanoma. Committed to the support of medical research in finding effective treatments and eventually a cure for melanoma, the MRF also educates patients and physicians about prevention, diagnosis and the treatment of melanoma. The MRF is a committed advocate for the melanoma community, helping to raise awareness of this disease and the need for a cure. The MRF's website ([www.melanoma.org](http://www.melanoma.org)) is the premier source for melanoma information seekers. Find the MRF on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

#### **MRA Contact:**

Michael Kaplan, President and CEO  
(202) 336-8939  
[mkaplan@curemelanoma.org](mailto:mkaplan@curemelanoma.org)

#### **MRF Contact:**

Kyleigh LiPira, CEO  
(202) 347-9675  
[klipira@melanoma.org](mailto:klipira@melanoma.org)