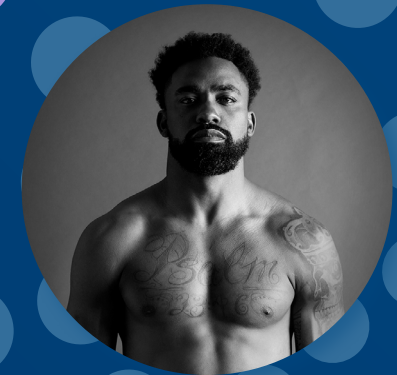


Stewardship Report

Winter 2025 / Volume 08



Progress is Power

The MRF's mission is to eradicate melanoma by accelerating medical **research** while **educating** and **advocating** for the melanoma community.



The MRF is pleased to announce it is a **4-star-rated charity** receiving a **96% rating** by Charity Navigator.

Progress is Power

The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) was founded in 1996 by Diana Ashby, a melanoma patient who was frustrated by the lack of treatment options and support resources available at the time.

Diana's vision was to give melanoma patients and caregivers a reason for hope. Twenty-eight years later, her legacy lives on as the MRF has grown into the largest independent organization devoted to all types of melanoma, funding more than \$26 million in life-saving research and offering a powerful voice for the 1.4 million Americans living with melanoma.



Kyleigh LiPira
Chief Executive Officer

"The Foundation is completely funded by the community it serves and many times those donors are directly and tragically impacted by the disease. They are patients, their loved ones and friends who are seeking better treatment options and, one day, a cure for melanoma and its various forms. We are grateful to our village of supporters who partner with us and advocate for the entire melanoma community whether by funding research, speaking to their lawmakers or by sharing their own story to inspire and uplift others."



Douglas Brodman
Board Chair

"Since joining the MRF Board as a patient/survivor, I have remained steadfast in my commitment to enhancing our research investment and applying a patient-centric approach to our programming and services that best meets our community's needs. In late 2023, we launched our 'Legacy of Progress' Endowment solely to fund future research growth and treatment opportunities. As a Founding 'Legacy of Progress' Member, I am pleased with the overwhelming response of our community's commitment to funding research (50% of goal achieved), knowing it contributes directly to finding a cure. Our future of finding a cure not only relies on research but in listening to patients/advocates/constituents to better address education around prevention of this disease, as a priority for the Foundation. Our commitment for the future is stronger than ever to achieve a world where melanoma no longer exists."

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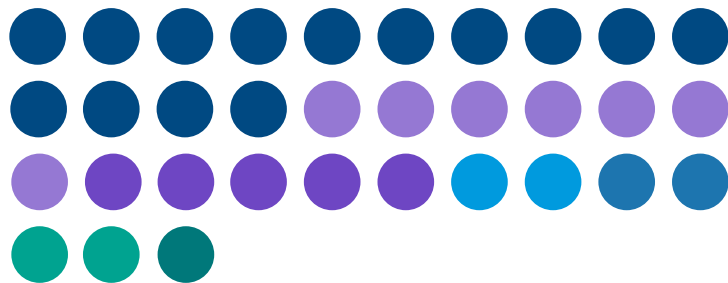
34

Research and Science



Accelerating Research: Grants

From basic science to clinical trials, medical students to established investigators.



33

Grants awarded in 2024, totaling more than \$1,400,000.

GRANTS INCLUDE:



Medical Student Research Awards



Career Development Awards (CDA)



Resident/Fellow Research Awards



Merit Awards in conjunction with the Society for Melanoma Research (SMR)



Established Investigator Awards (EIA)
(including the Prevention Award in Honor of Teddi Mellencamp)



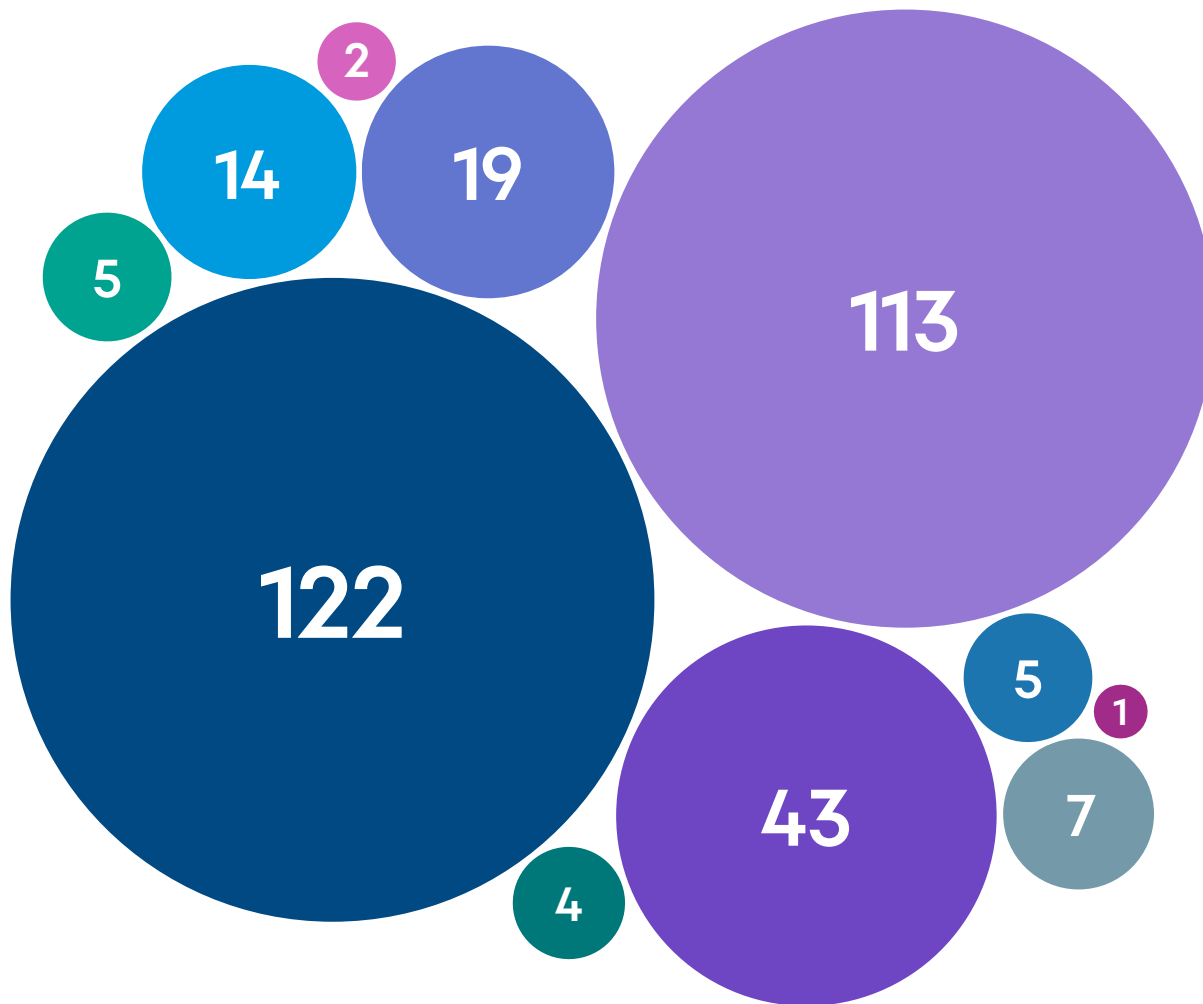
MRF Breakthrough Consortium Pilot Translational Awards



MRF Endowed Merit Award in conjunction with Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation

Total Grants Funding Is Now Over \$26.4M and Awarded Through:

● Medical Student Research Awards	122
● Career Development Awards	113
● Established Investigator Awards	43
● Merit Awards in conjunction with the Society for Melanoma Research (SMR)	19
● Team Awards	14
● Donor-Directed Awards	5
● Resident/Fellow Research Awards	5
● MRF Breakthrough Consortium Pilot Translational Awards	4
● MRF Endowed Merit Awards in conjunction with Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation	2
● Mid-Career Bridge Grant	1
● Other Awards	7



New in 2025:

Lethal Melanoma Established Investigator Award (EIA) in honor of Katie Morgan, a grant focused on either defining lethal melanoma and/or identifying lethal melanoma biomarkers at the patient, tumor and/or blood level.

Partnering With Leaders in Melanoma

Hosted the NRAS Workshop

OCTOBER 2024

Workshop co-chairs:



Dr. Adil Daud
UCSF Health



Dr. Martin McMahon
Huntsman Cancer Institute



Dr. Keiran Smalley
Moffitt Cancer Center

The MRF convened melanoma investigators and industry representatives for a one-day workshop entitled, "Targeting RAS Signaling for Future Melanoma Therapy." The mission of the workshop was to translate direct pharmacologic signaling of RAS from the bench to the bedside, elucidate mechanisms of response resistance and identify logical combination therapies. For melanoma patients with NRAS-driven melanoma, immunotherapy remains the front-line treatment option. For the many patients who will either not respond to or ultimately progress on immunotherapy, current options for second-line therapy are limited and not particularly effective. The advent and testing of new NRAS oncoprotein inhibitors in late-stage preclinical testing offers effective NRAS-targeted second-line treatments as an exciting prospect.

Read Dr. McMahon's workshop summary for more information:
Targeting NRAS Oncoproteins for the Treatment of Melanoma
— Melanoma Research Foundation



American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)

APRIL 5–10, 2024; SAN DIEGO, CA

Two oral and one poster presentations of MRF-funded research

American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)

MAY 31–JUNE 4, 2024; CHICAGO, IL

- Hosted the MRF Breakthrough Consortium Meeting and booth in the Advocacy Pavilion to promote the MRF's research and science grant program.
- Attended several sessions related to the results of melanoma clinical trials, many of which may lead to practice changing advancements related to: neoadjuvant vs. adjuvant therapy; immunotherapy and targeted therapy.

To learn more about the ASCO presentations view: **Promising Research Updates for Melanoma Patients Presented at ASCO – Melanoma Research Foundation**



MRFBC co-chairs (from L to R) — Richard D. Carvajal, MD, Northwell Health; Kyleigh LiPira, MRF CEO; Tara C. Mitchell, MD, Penn Medicine; and Ryan J. Sullivan, MD, Dana-Farber/ Harvard Cancer Center

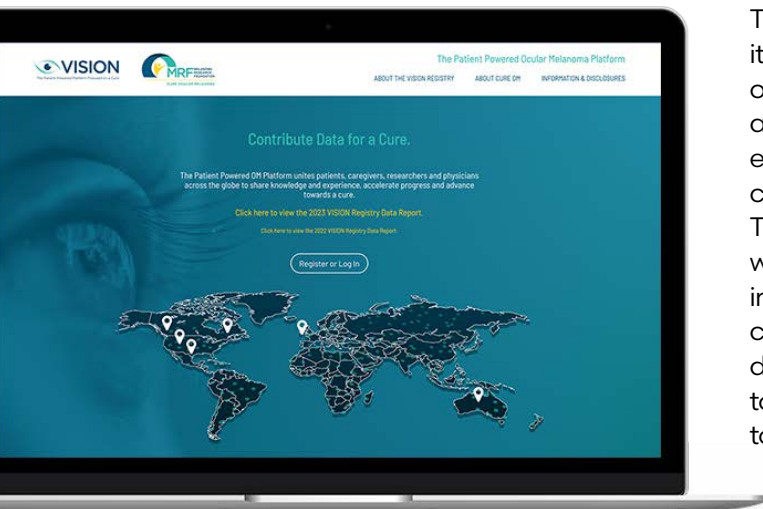
Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC)

NOVEMBER 6–9; HOUSTON, TX

One oral and four poster presentations of MRF-funded research

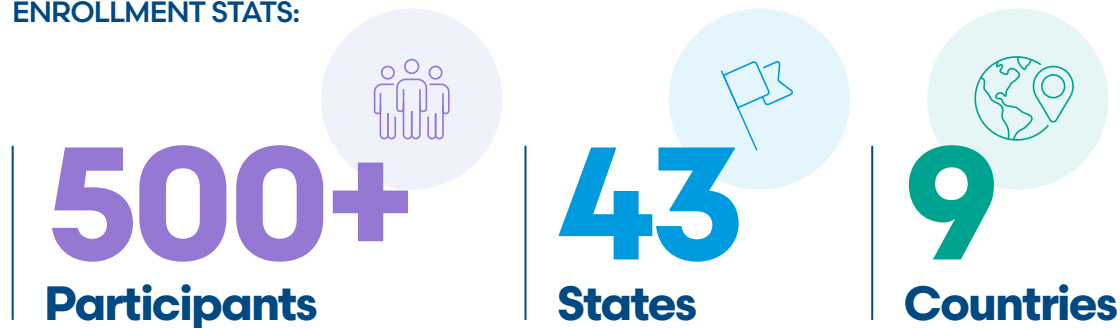
Research — **Rare Subtypes**

VISION expands with 500+ participants registered



The VISION Platform (VISION) is in its fourth year of recruitment with over 500 registered participants from around the globe. VISION’s power is elevating the patient perspective by collecting patient-reported data. The VISION team is currently working with partners and stakeholders to incorporate VISION into ongoing clinical trials. We continue to use VISION data highlighting the patient journey to improve patient care and access to new effective treatment options.

ENROLLMENT STATS:



“The VISION Registry allows us as patients to provide information to help researchers identify characteristics and potential causes of ocular melanoma. **The latest updates to the registry streamline the process with a well-thought-out user experience, making it much easier to provide updates.**”

— Registered User

“This innovative platform is **making a difference by fostering connections and opening doors** to finding clinical trials that work for you. Let’s take advantage of these resources and support one another on this journey!”

— Registered User

Advancing Research for the Rare Melanoma Subtypes

Hosted Meeting

CURE OM Global Science Meeting

CURE OM catalyzed the OM research field through its innovative approach to the 13th Annual CURE OM Global Science Meeting held in the fall of 2024. Each year, CURE OM organizes this global science meeting in conjunction with the Society for Melanoma Research Congress (SMR) to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation aimed at discovering effective treatments — and ultimately a cure — for OM. This year's meeting brought together leading OM researchers and clinicians as well as patients and industry partners to discuss pivotal research, all with the shared goal of improving outcomes for patients. The scientific meeting highlighted significant advancements in ocular melanoma research while also identifying critical areas for further development. Attendees, which included researchers, clinicians and industry partners stressed the importance of ongoing collaboration, data sharing and overcoming barriers to clinical trial prioritization and advancement as well as therapy implementation and access.



New Rare Subtype Grant Opportunity in 2025

The MRF will offer a new grant opportunity — Pediatric Melanoma Established Investigator Award (EIA). This EIA will be available to established melanoma researchers or senior researchers specifically focused on advancing pediatric and adult youth adolescent (AYA) melanoma research and treatment options.



“As a pediatric melanoma patient, I became involved with the MRF in 2016. Last March, I attended Advocacy Days to push legislation to increase research funding for the rare melanoma subtypes and policies that matter to our community. **It’s so important to those of us from the rare melanoma community.**”

— Marit Peterson

Pediatric melanoma survivor and
2024 NYC Gala Courage Awardee



Devarati Mitra, MD, PhD
MD Anderson
Cancer Center



Spotlighting a Mucosal Melanoma Career Development Award

Neoadjuvant immunotherapy and radiotherapy for mucosal melanoma

“Our project aims to improve outcomes for patients with mucosal melanoma, a rare subtype of melanoma arising from non-skin surfaces like the inside of the nose and sinuses or the anogenital tract. Despite major advances in melanoma treatments broadly, patients with this diagnosis continue to have significantly worse prognosis than those with more common cutaneous melanomas. Specifically, we are investigating if adding preoperative radiotherapy to immunotherapy is a novel treatment strategy that can improve disease control and quality of life while also looking for biomarkers that predict for response to therapy and outcomes.”



Kevin Nguyen
West Virginia
University
Research
Corporation



Spotlighting a Pediatric Melanoma Resident Fellow Award

Predictors of Nodal Metastases in Pediatric Melanomas

“Pediatric melanoma is a rare entity, and our study aims to discover factors that shape how this disease behaves aggressively to better guide patient-centered treatment decisions.”



Michael Heiferman, MD
University
of Illinois
at Chicago



Spotlighting a Uveal Melanoma Career Development Award

Assessment of Uveal Melanoma Using Machine Learning

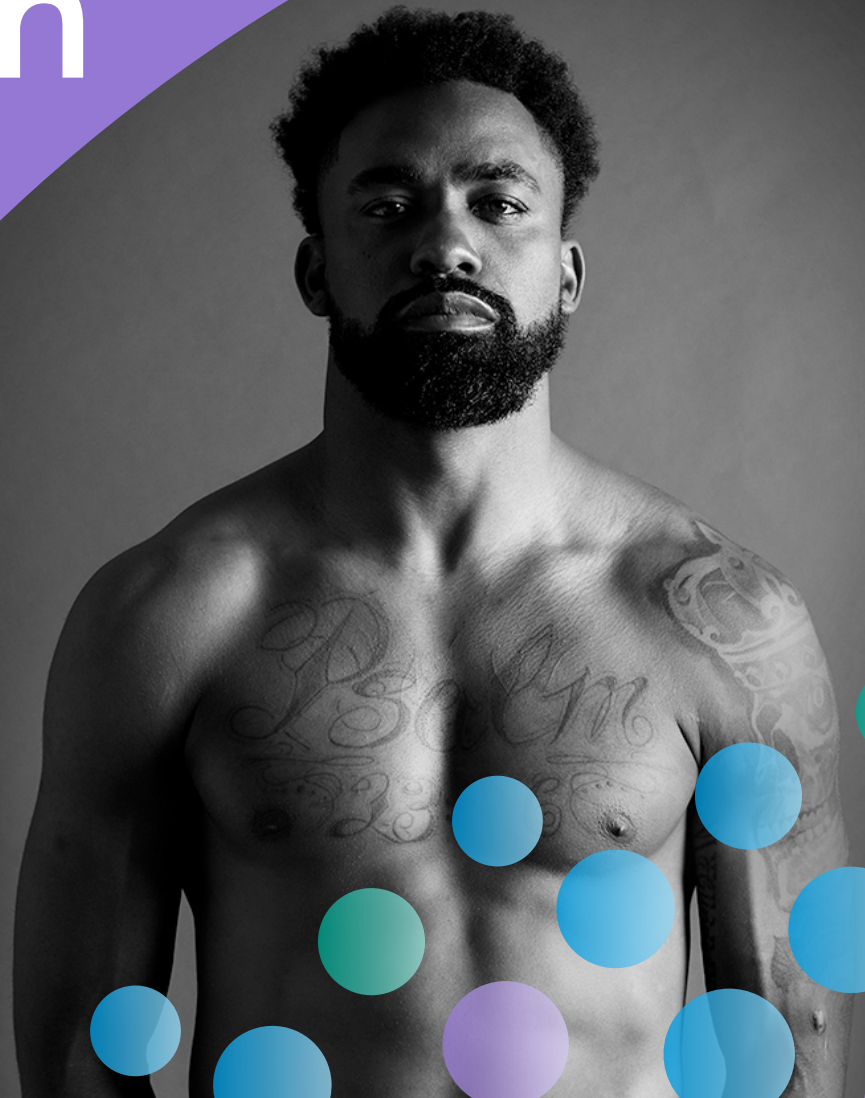
“The goal of our research is to improve the detection and diagnosis of eye tumors. By helping doctors diagnose uveal melanoma earlier, we aim to ensure that patients receive timely treatment and the best overall care for those affected.”

Publications

The 2023 Cure Ocular Melanoma (CURE OM) Global Science meeting in Philadelphia focused on advancing research, treatment and patient advocacy for ocular melanoma (OM). The report, published on October 9, 2024, in *Pigment Cell and Melanoma Research*, covers genetics, therapies and clinical trials to improve outcomes. The meeting aimed to enhance collaboration among researchers, clinicians and patients to improve outcomes for those affected by this rare cancer. Key presentations highlighted the latest findings in genetics, therapies and clinical trials, fostering a comprehensive dialogue on future directions in OM research.



Education, Awareness, and Prevention

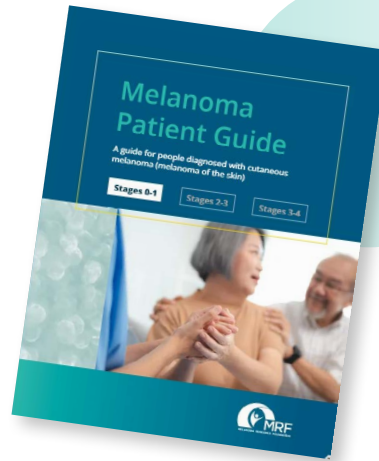


New Educational Materials and Resources

Melanoma Patient Guide 0-1

The new Melanoma Patient Guide, Stages 0 or 1 provides essential information for cutaneous melanoma patients on:

- Key details about diagnosis and staging
- Questions to ask healthcare provider
- Tips for emotional support and managing stress
- Strategies to reduce the risk of recurrence and protect your skin



Educational Literature

The MRF currently hosts 27 pieces of educational literature on the MRF website that are free to download or order. In 2024, over 26,000 materials were sent out to cancer centers, dermatology offices, health departments, research institutes, universities and schools in 28 states across the country.

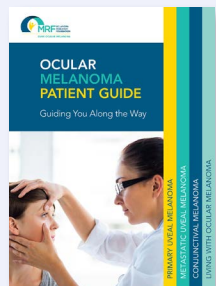
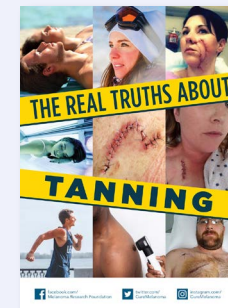
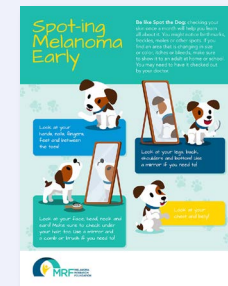
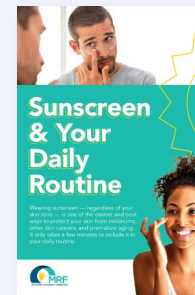


Visit [melanoma.org/educationinstitute](https://www.melanoma.org/educationinstitute) to learn more.

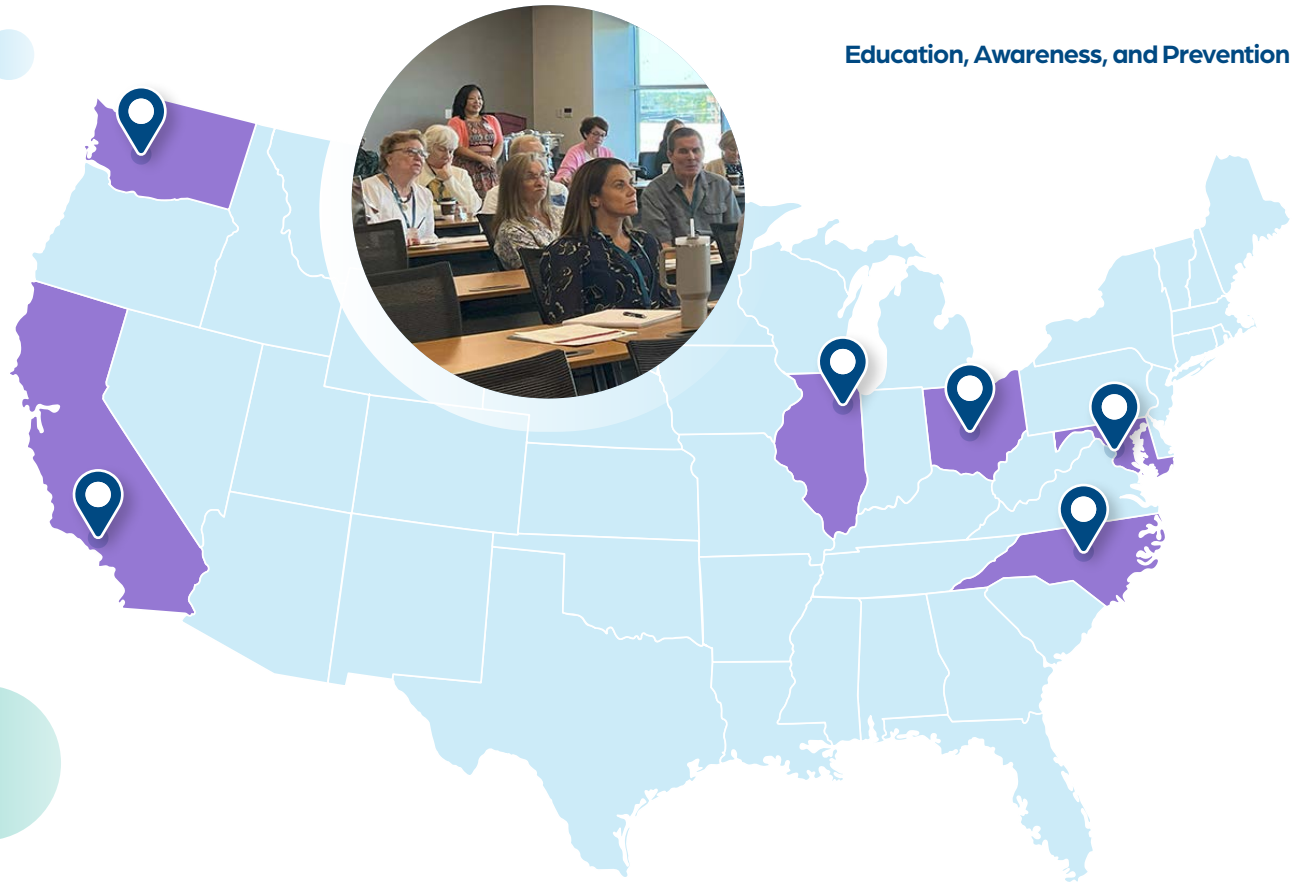


TIL Cell Therapy Infographic

The TIL Cell Therapy infographic provides a clear overview of what TIL Cell Therapy is, detailing its process from preparing TIL in the lab, delivering them into the body and through the post-infusion steps.



Patient Education – Cutaneous



Hosted 6 Patient Symposia

Santa Monica, CA

- Providence Saint John's Cancer Institute

Columbus, OH

- The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

Chapel Hill, NC

- UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

Seattle, WA

- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center

Washington, DC

- Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center

Chicago, IL

- Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center

To view Patient Symposia recordings,
access the MRF's YouTube playlist below:



Hosted 8 cutaneous “Ask the Expert” webinars

- Oncolytic Viral Therapies in the Treatment of Melanoma and Skin Cancers
- The Current State and Evolution of Immunotherapy Treatment in Melanoma
- TIL Cell Therapy: A Review of the Newest FDA-Approved Drug for Melanoma
- Shining a Light on Sun Safety and Early Detection of Melanoma
- Cannabis and Cancer Care: Removing the Stigma for Patients
- Surgical Management of Melanoma
- Understanding the TIL Cell Therapy Patient Journey
- MRD Testing for Melanoma: The Next Step in Recurrence Prevention



Ask the Expert
Thursday, August 8, 2024
7:00PM ET

In partnership with:
MAYO CLINIC



Surgical Management of Melanoma



Dr. Leila Tolaymat
Moderator
Dermatologist
Mayo Clinic in Florida



Dr. James Jakub
Panelist
Surgical Oncologist
Mayo Clinic in Florida



Dr. Sanjay Bagaria
Panelist
Surgical Oncologist
Mayo Clinic in Florida

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR EDUCATION INSTITUTE SPONSORS!



Prevention Committee

Mission: To increase and steer the MRF's influence within the greater melanoma prevention community. The Committee identifies and supports strategies to enhance the Foundation's focus on melanoma prevention and early detection within its mission areas of research, education and advocacy.

Members Include

Elise A. Barish (Chair)

Stan Adler

Douglas Brodman

Debbie Churgai

Laura Ferris

Miriam Kadosh

Kyleigh LiPira

Diana Olvera — Dermatology
Interest Group Association
(DIGA) representative

Alison Martin

James Merrick

Kim Watkins

Nicole Werpachowski

Major Initiatives

SunAWARE Educational Initiative

- ✓ Took major steps to update the SunAWARE K–5th grade sun safety curriculum, intended to teach students about the sun's effects and the importance of practicing sun safety in a fun, engaging and impactful way.
 - ✓ Conducted landscape analysis of current sun safety programs.
 - ✓ Reviewed national health education standards.
 - ✓ Created all new curricula for K–5th grade.
 - ✓ Reviewed curriculum with three review committees which included the following experts: melanoma experts, patients, parents, medical students, teachers, nurses and school administrators.
-
- ✓ Started the "Prevention Pulse" to keep the Prevention Committee and melanoma community informed and up to date on prevention-related initiatives throughout the United States.
 - ✓ Disseminated two surveys to the community: the Prevention Priorities Needs Assessment Survey for Healthcare Providers, and the Prevention Priorities Needs Assessment for the Community.



SunAWARE®

Avoid unprotected exposure to sunlight, seek shade and never indoor tan.

Wear sun protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses year-round.

Apply recommended amounts of broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sunburn protection factor (SPF) \geq 30 to all exposed skin and reapply every two hours, or as needed.

Routinely examine your whole body for changes in your skin and report suspicious changes to a parent or healthcare provider.

Educate your family and community about the need to be SunAWARE.



Dermatology Alliance Council (DAC)

Mission: To convene the academic and private practice dermatology community around prevention, early detection and research initiatives to foster collaboration in the field and inform and support the patient-focused programming of the MRF.

Members

Laura Ferris, MD, PhD (Co-Chair)
 Harper N. Price, MD, FAAD, FAAP (Co-Chair)
 Crystal Aguh, MD
 Jeremy Bordeaux, MD, MPH
 Bruce Brod, MD, MHCI, FAAD
 Catherine Carretero, MD
 Jennifer Choi, MD
 Lilia Correa, MD, FAAD, FACMS
 James Grichnik, MD, PhD
 Douglas Grossman, MD, PhD
 Allan C. Halpern, MD, MSc
 Rebecca Hartman, MD, MPH
 Elena Hawryluk, MD, PhD

Sancy Leachman, MD, PhD
 Orit Markowitz, MD
 Brent Moody, MD, FAAD, FACMS
 Ata Moshiri, MD, MPH
 Kelly Nelson, MD, FAAD
 Todd Schlesinger, MD, FAAD
 Muneeb Shah, DO
 Jessica Sheehan, MD
 Susan Swetter, MD, FAAD
 Hensin Tsao, MD, PhD
 Scott Walter, MD
 Mackenzi Wehner, MD, MPhil, FAAD
 Howa Yeung, MD, MSc

Major Initiatives/Accomplishments

Presentation of the sunscreen filter approval issue in order to have shared advocacy between patients and providers.
 Held lethal melanoma summit in February.

Key themes included:

- How can we identify those melanomas that are leading to 8,000 deaths a year?
- How do we find these patients earlier?
- How do we identify the melanomas that need the most attention?

1

Held one in-person meeting in March 2024 in conjunction with AAD and held one virtual meeting in September 2024



2

TikTok filter created in collaboration with Stupid Cancer for Melanoma Awareness Month



Melanoma Awareness and Prevention



Digital and print campaigns dedicated to cutaneous melanoma prevention and awareness of the rare melanoma subtypes, including ocular, mucosal, pediatric and acral lentiginous. Each campaign is intended to empower patients and caregivers while increasing awareness of each melanoma subtype.



#GetNaked

Cutaneous melanoma early detection and prevention and rare melanoma subtype awareness campaign held each May during Melanoma Awareness Month. The campaign urges everyone to #GetNaked once a month for a self-skin exam at home and have an annual full body exam by a board-certified dermatologist.

The 2024 campaign featured **Raheem Mostert**, Running Back for the Miami Dolphins, melanoma supporter and advocate.

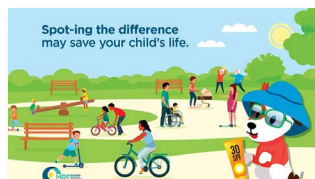
Read his #GetNaked spokesperson blog here: melanoma.org/news-press/getnaked-raheem-mostert/



#OutOfTheShadows

Mucosal melanoma awareness campaign held each March. The #OutOfTheShadows campaign raises awareness of this rare melanoma subtype that represents less than 2% of all melanoma diagnoses each year.

Read the story of a mucosal melanoma patient at: melanoma.org/news-press/shelley-belangers-journey-with-mucosal-melanoma/



#SpotTheDog

Pediatric and AYA melanoma awareness campaign held each September during Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month. The #SpotTheDog campaign raises awareness of and promotes sun safety for parents, pediatricians and dermatologists.

Read the story of a pediatric melanoma survivor at: melanoma.org/news-press/pediatric-melanoma-awareness-marit-peterson/



#EyeGetDilated

Ocular melanoma awareness campaign held each November. The #EyeGetDilated campaign raises awareness of this rare melanoma subtype and overall eye health and encourages all to receive an annual dilated eye exam.

Read the story of a metastatic ocular melanoma survivor at: melanoma.org/news-press/eyegetdilated-ocular-melanoma-awareness-jon-davis/

Education — **Rare Subtypes**

Ocular Melanoma (OM) Support Group

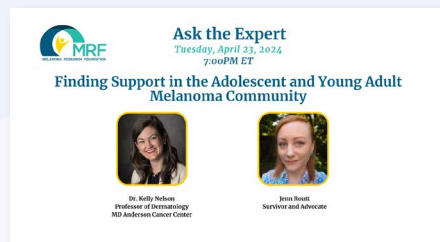
The Ocular Melanoma online support group had a successful year, with up to 25 participants per group. The group included individuals with both primary and metastatic OM, creating a diverse and supportive community. We had expert speakers who shared about:

- Low vision support
- Peer-to-peer support
- Mental health and cancer exercise
- Nutrition
- Cancer and Careers

To join an Ocular Melanoma Support Group, contact CUREOM@melanoma.org

2 Rare Melanoma “Ask the Expert” Webinars Were Held

- Understanding Uveal Melanoma: Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Options
- Finding Support in the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Melanoma Community



Eyes on a Cure: Ocular Melanoma Patient and Caregiver Symposium (Boston, MA)

MAY 3RD–5TH, 2024/80 ATTENDEES

Sessions included:

- Primary Ocular Melanoma Diagnosis and Treatment
- Overview of Metastatic Treatment Approaches
- Patient and Caregiver Panel
- Community Building and Self-Care including a drum circle
- Mind-Body Skills for Managing Uncertainty and Fear of Recurrence



Eye on OM Quarterly Newsletter

The newsletter includes:

- Community Stories: Inspiring updates from those impacted by ocular melanoma
- Research and Science: Latest breakthroughs in ocular melanoma research
- Advocacy News: Updates from city councils to Capitol Hill
- Educational Resources: New tools and materials for patients and caregivers
- Upcoming Events: Mark your calendar for key CURE OM events



Advocacy



Advocacy Days

“I am now more motivated than ever to advocate for these changes. At the Melanoma Research Foundation’s advocacy days, I engage in meaningful dialogues, pushing for better insurance practices and broader understanding from congressional representatives. It’s crucial that they grasp the stakes involved and the profound impact of their decisions on patients’ lives. My message to others is clear: **Be vocal, share your story, and stay engaged.** Together, we can amplify our voices and foster change that not only addresses but also anticipates the needs of melanoma patients and survivors.”

— Steven Precker

Key Advocacy Priorities

Prevention

Remove barriers to sunscreen filter approvals so that newer sunscreens can be approved that benefit a wider range of skin tones and textures.

Access

- Remove cost barriers to skin cancer screenings at the state level
- Eliminate originating site requirements and end geographic restrictions for telehealth use
- Address utilization management issues that delay and prevent melanoma treatment

Research

- \$40 million for the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs’ (CDMRP) Melanoma Research Program (MRP) in the Defense appropriations bill
- Support \$51.303 billion for NIH, \$7.934 billion for NCI, \$6 million for CDC Skin Cancer Prevention Program and include melanoma language under NCI in LHHS Committee Report



50
Advocates



17
States



54
Hill Meetings



Email and Letter-Writing Campaign

126 advocates made 252 contacts with California state lawmakers to urge them to introduce No Copay for Skin Cancer Screening legislation in the state.



From left to right:
Susan O'Carroll,
MRF Board Member,
Guilia Newton
and Liz Reilly



126
Advocates



252
Contacts

Policy Highlights

- Built grassroots campaign to introduce No Copay legislation in California. Provided California lawmakers with draft legislation.
- Testified before the FDA on over-the-counter monograph drug user fee program reauthorization for sunscreen filter approvals.
- Testified before New Jersey Senate Committee on Education hearing on Senate bill 1548 which would allow children to access sunscreen in schools without a doctor's note.
- Florida No Copay for Skin Cancer Screenings bill signed into law for Florida state employee health plan.
- Governors Tim Walz (MN), Jared Polis (CO) and Katie Hobbs (AZ) declared May Melanoma Awareness Month thanks to efforts by MRF patient advocates.
- Participated in Congressional briefing hosted by Rep. Dave Joyce on sunscreen filter approval issues.

Global Melanoma Coalition

On September 13, the Global Melanoma Coalition met in Barcelona just prior to the start of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO). Twenty organizations from across the world came together to discuss melanoma prevention policy, patient engagement strategies, survivorship and innovative therapies.



Donor Support and Events



Miles for Melanoma



17
Cities



6,494
Total Participants



372
Total Teams



“I was diagnosed with my first melanoma when pregnant with my first-born. For the past 12 years it’s been an education, support and survival. I’m SO BLESSED with an incredible team of doctors and family, and **this event is an amazing way to show my kids the importance of safe sun, support, trust in your doctors, and a way to CELEBRATE life.** We walk yearly (even virtually) with my children, my husband and my parents. Being together we are stronger!”

— Kim Burke from Team Burke, New England Miles

“I participate to help raise money for melanoma research. This event means the world to me since I am a melanoma survivor. If there was no research, I may not be here. If I can help at least one person, **I know I’m making a difference!**”

— Erin McCaffery from Team Erin’s Avengers, Philadelphia Miles



\$1,252,000+

Raised



Galas

In 2024, two galas raised over \$1.3 million to support melanoma research, education and advocacy while celebrating an incredible lineup of honorees. Funds raised at the New York Gala's live fund-a-grant were dedicated to funding the MRF's fourth-ever pediatric research grant.

Teddi Mellencamp



23rd Annual New York Gala featuring emcee Teddi Mellencamp

OCT. 24TH

Funds raised will support a pediatric melanoma Established Investigator Award in 2025.

Honorees

- Compassionate Care Award — Julie Russak, MD, FAAD
- Humanitarian Award — Daniel Coit, MD, FACS
- Influencer Award — Ian Michael Crumm
- Courage Awards — Raheem Mostert and Marit Peterson



EltaMD Guests and MRF CEO Kyleigh LiPira

13th Annual Denver Gala featuring emcee Mike Nelson

SEPT. 19TH

Honorees

- Compassionate Care Award — Lisa Twining, BSN, RN
- Corporate Responsibility Award — Bristol Myers Squibb
- Humanitarian Award — Robert Breeze, MD
- Courage Awards — Kelly Gallagher-Abbott, David A. Henry and Nancy Nelson (posthumous), accepted on her behalf by brother Mike Nelson



Dr. Stephen Ho, David A. Henry, Kelly Gallagher-Abbott and Mike Nelson

Featured CommUNITY Fundraisers

In 2024 we had 15 new CommUNITY Fundraising events to support our mission.

Interested in hosting your own fundraising event? Please contact volunteer@melanoma.org for more information.



#GetNakedJax

In October 2024, the 4th annual #GetNakedJax event was held in Jacksonville, FL. The event raised an outstanding \$233,653 to support groundbreaking research that explores how melanoma cells evade detection by the immune system. Pediatric melanoma patient Sophie Ogden shared her journey with melanoma during the event.



Your Next Step Is the Cure

Hosted by CURE OM Steering Committee members Linda O'Brien and Bernadette Boyle, the event raised \$18,600 to support CURE OM's VISION Platform.



Hoops for Hope

In March 2024, the Ward Family hosted their first-ever Hoops for Hope event in Raleigh, NC, to honor the life of their son, Cameron Reese Ward. This event raised over \$93,000 to support a research grant for metastatic melanoma.

Featured Corporate Partners



Neutrogena

In 2024, Neutrogena and its parent company, Kenvue, made a significant contribution to the MRF's mission. They continued their support of the Miles for Melanoma 5k series, the Dermatology Advisory Council and Melanoma Awareness Month. Additionally, they backed the MRF's policy initiatives through Advocacy Days and collaborated on the inaugural SPF Fest, an event where Chicago residents received free skin checks and MRF educational materials.



Aura Biosciences

Aura Biosciences, a company dedicated to ocular melanoma treatments, made a significant contribution to the MRF's CURE OM initiatives. They supported the ocular melanoma patient registry, VISION and participated in key events including the Eyes on a Cure Patient Meeting, Miles for Melanoma in Boston and the CURE OM Science Meeting in October. Additionally, they backed the #EyeGetDilated awareness campaign, which encourages individuals to undergo annual eye exams, the most effective way to detect ocular melanoma early.



Iovance Biotherapeutics

In February 2024, Iovance Biotherapeutics received the exciting news that their TIL Cell therapy was approved by the FDA. Since then, they have teamed up with the MRF on several initiatives, including Advocacy Days, Ask the Expert webinars and the Miles for Melanoma 5K in Philadelphia. They are also continuing their partnership with the MRF to raise awareness about this groundbreaking therapy by funding an update to the TIL Therapy Animated Patient Video and creating a patient journey one-pager.



BloqUV and TiZo

Two companies in the sun-safety sector, BloqUV (a UPF clothing brand) and TiZo (a mineral sunscreen brand), have made a significant impact on the MRF's prevention and awareness efforts. BloqUV has been a long-time partner, supporting the MRF for over eight years by donating a percentage of sales each Melanoma Awareness Month and on Giving Tuesday. TiZo, a newer partner, also contributes a portion of sales during May and on Giving Tuesday. In addition, TiZo has supported the Dermatology Advisory Council and the Miles for Melanoma event in Philadelphia.



DONATING TO ADVANCE MELANOMA RESEARCH

Honoring a Legacy: The Reese Ward Foundation

The MRF is proud to announce two groundbreaking research grants funded by the Ward Family and Reese Ward Foundation, in honor of Cameron Reese Ward.

Reese passed on December 29, 2022, leaving behind a legacy of kindness, strength and unwavering hope. To honor Reese and continue the fight against melanoma, the Ward family has dedicated themselves to advancing melanoma research and improving outcomes for patients and their families through the Reese Ward Foundation.

Through their 2024 Hoops for Hope event in Raleigh, NC, the Ward Family funded a \$200,000 Established Investigator Award to support

Kari Kendra's, MD, PhD research at Ohio State University on "TGFB β i NK Cell Infusions in Patients with Melanoma Brain Metastases." Dr. Kendra's research is to examine how to combat brain metastasis — a huge hurdle for metastatic melanoma patients with a small percentage who are able to fully respond to treatment.

Building on this momentum, the Ward Family will be hosting the Reese Ward Foundation's inaugural Black and White Ball on March 1, 2025, which will fund a \$100,000 Career Development Award to support Sarwish Rafiq's, PhD, MA research at Emory University on "engaging the endogenous immune system with CAR T cells".

Reese's legacy of compassion, courage and faith lives on through these grants, offering hope to countless melanoma patients and their families.



Honoring a Champion: The Teddi Mellencamp Prevention Grant

The MRF is proud to announce the 2024 recipient of the Prevention Award in Honor of Teddi Mellencamp:

Elena Ezhkova, PhD, MS, from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

This \$250,000 grant supports groundbreaking research into the ways ultraviolet (UV) light contributes to melanoma formation beyond DNA damage — offering new hope for preventative measures.



Elena
Ezhkova,
PhD, MS

The grant's namesake, Teddi Mellencamp, is more than a television personality — she is a voice for melanoma awareness, a tireless advocate and a member of the melanoma community herself. As the 2023 #GetNaked spokesperson, Teddi has courageously used her platform to share her melanoma journey, encouraging her audience to prioritize skin checks and sun protection. Despite her ongoing battle with the disease, she remains an unwavering source of inspiration, proof that early detection and education save lives.

Dr. Ezhkova's research builds on Teddi's mission to shift the conversation from treatment to prevention. Her work explores how UV exposure creates a harmful environment in the skin that fosters melanoma development, even without direct DNA mutations. She has identified a critical role for neighboring skin cells, which, after UV damage, begin secreting proteins that alter melanocyte behavior, potentially triggering melanoma. This study promises to uncover pathways that could one day lead to targeted interventions, reducing melanoma risk for future generations.

By naming this Prevention Award in honor of Teddi Mellencamp, the MRF acknowledges her enduring legacy of awareness, advocacy and hope for a world without melanoma.

Legacy of Progress/ Planned Giving





We are excited to celebrate a significant milestone in our journey: the one-year anniversary of the Legacy of Progress Endowment Fund, launched on November 1, 2023. Thanks to the incredible dedication and generosity of our community, we have exceeded our initial goal, reaching an impressive \$5 million in funding!

This achievement not only reflects our collective commitment but also positions us to aim for another \$5 million in the coming year or two. With your continued support, we are confident that we can achieve this goal and further advance groundbreaking melanoma research.

As we look to utilize some of our funding to support innovative research as early as January 2025, this progress marks a substantial leap forward in our mission to eradicate melanoma and provide hope to countless individuals affected by this disease.

Together, we are forging a legacy that transcends boundaries. With your continued involvement, we are poised to overcome any challenge and achieve our ambitious goals. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. Together, we are making history and creating a brighter future for all.



We invite you

to watch this brief video featuring Endowment Fund Founders, as they share the immense value of this initiative.

Celebrating Legacies Today: Why Letting Us Know Matters

We are incredibly grateful for all our donors who support us in our mission to fight melanoma. Every year, we are touched by the generosity of individuals who leave us bequests and legacy gifts. Often, these wonderful people make such impactful contributions without us ever having had the chance to meet them, know their stories or celebrate their lives while they were here.

When you let us know about your plans to include the MRF in your will, it opens up a beautiful opportunity for both of us. It allows us to celebrate you now, while you're here, and ensures your legacy is honored in a way that reflects your values and wishes.

We've had donors whose families reached out to tell us about their loved ones after they passed. These stories are always moving and powerful, but we can't help but feel a pang of regret that we didn't have the chance to know these incredible people when they were alive. By sharing your intentions with us, we can forge a real connection with you, one that celebrates your life and the impact you want to make.

When you notify us of your bequest, it allows us to express our heartfelt thanks and celebrate your decision. We can share your story with our community — if you're comfortable with that — showing how one person's generosity can inspire others. It's not just about the future impact of your gift; it's about honoring you today.



Leadership




Board of Directors Updates

The MRF is grateful for the service of melanoma survivor, longtime advocate and Founder/Creative Director of Adler Branding & Marketing, Stan Adler, who served on the Board for over a decade and Laura Ferris, MD, PhD of University of North Carolina, who served on the Board for three years. Stan helped steer the MRF's communications and marketing strategy and was pivotal in the development of the online Patient Forum. Laura co-chaired the Dermatology Advisory Council and sat on the Prevention Committee.

Their collective leadership, commitment to advancing hope for the melanoma community and dedication to the MRF's mission has been instrumental. We thank Stan and Laura for tirelessly steering the Foundation to better enable progress for the melanoma community and look forward to their continued support.

A circular portrait of Stan Adler, a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a blue shirt and a dark jacket. The portrait is set within a larger purple circular frame.

Stan Adler

A circular portrait of Laura Ferris, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black top. The portrait is set within a larger light blue circular frame.

Laura Ferris,
MD, PhD



Rebecca Hartman, MD, MPH

Rebecca Hartman, MD, MPH joined the MRF Board of Directors in January 2025. Dr. Hartman is dedicated to patient care, clinical innovation, research and education with a focus on skin cancer, including melanoma and keratinocyte carcinomas (KCs, basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas). She presently spends time in outpatient clinical activities as well as clinical research, education and administration. Dr. Hartman currently has clinical sessions at Dana Farber Cancer Institute (“DFCI”) and the VA Boston Healthcare System (“VABHS”). At DFCI, she specializes in melanoma and care for melanoma patients referred regionally, nationally and internationally. At VABHS, she sees a high-risk skin cancer population. She also serves as the Director of Melanoma Epidemiology at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. In this role, Dr. Hartman conducts research and serves as a resource for trainees and colleagues with melanoma research questions. She is also involved in leadership at VABHS, serving as Chief of the Dermatology Section. This role also has an educational component and she ensures residents at all three Boston dermatology residency programs have a strong clinical and educational experience at VA Boston. She has been actively involved with the MRF’s Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Dermatology Alliance Council (DAC). Her dedication to melanoma research is evident as she received a Career Development Award for her research on the “Impact of Covid-19 on Melanoma Patients.”



Michelle Henry, MD, FAAD

Michelle Henry, MD, FAAD joined the MRF Board of Directors in January 2025. Dr. Henry is a board-certified dermatologist and dermatologic surgeon renowned as an international speaker, trainer and author. She is the CEO and founder of Skin & Aesthetic Surgery of Manhattan and the founder of The Henry Research Group. Dr. Henry also serves as a Clinical Instructor of Dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College. She completed her dermatology residency at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, where she served as Chief Resident, followed by a fellowship in cutaneous oncology, Mohs Micrographic and reconstructive surgery at Harvard Medical School. Her clinical focus includes high-risk skin cancer treatments, cosmetic surgery, hair loss solutions and skin rejuvenation techniques, particularly for diverse skin types. Dr. Henry has been featured in notable publications such as *Harper’s Bazaar*, *The Cut*, *Byrdie* and *Coveteur*. She has authored numerous articles and book chapters on skin cancer treatment and surgery, aesthetic treatments for diverse skin tones and innovative hair restoration techniques. Dr. Henry is also currently an on-air contributor for *The TODAY Show*. In addition to conducting FDA clinical trials, Dr. Henry serves as the U.S. consulting dermatologist for Kiehl’s and is a member of the product validation board at L’Oreal. She is a distinguished fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology, American Society of Dermatologic Surgery and American College of Mohs Surgery. Dr. Henry is actively involved in the medical and aesthetic community, serving on the ASLMS Task Force, Elle Advisor Board and Self Advisory Board. Her commitment to holistic care integrates the latest advancements in technology and scientific research to provide her patients with effective and cutting-edge solutions, ensuring optimal outcomes and patient satisfaction. She was critical in helping establish the MRF’s Skin of Color Institute. In 2022, the MRF was honored to recognize Dr. Henry at the 21st Annual New York Gala with the Excellence in Prevention and to have her leadership as a Gala Co-Chair for the 2023 and 2024 events.



Patty Pophal

Patty Pophal joined the MRF Board of Directors in January 2025. Patty is a Senior Accountant at KMSH, an accounting firm in Beachwood, Ohio. She has extensive experience providing accounting and tax services to small privately held companies and individuals. She is a graduate of Notre Dame College of Ohio with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting. Patty has been involved with the MRF since 2017. Her daughter, Grace, was diagnosed in 2015 with Stage IV melanoma. Grace was an Ohio State University swimmer and graduate. She was always active and wanted to participate in a walk when she was well enough. She found the Miles for Melanoma event after a donation was made on her behalf. The family then formed Team Grace, and traveled to Columbus, Ohio with the largest team and funds raised for the event. Patty requested the event be moved to Cleveland and has chaired the event since 2018. Today, nationally, Cleveland ranks #1 in attendance and funds raised. Sadly, Grace lost her battle with melanoma on July 7, 2023. Patty continues her involvement with the MRF as chair of the Miles event, additionally helping to make connections within the medical community in Cleveland, Ohio.

Board of Directors

As of January 2025

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Michael Atkins, MD

Scientific Advisory Committee Co-Chair

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Secretary, Prevention Committee Chair

Kristina Gargiulo

Rebecca Hartman, MD, MPH

Michelle Henry, MD, FAAD

Kyleigh LiPira

CEO

Patty Pophal

Ashani Weeraratna, PhD

Scientific Advisory Committee Co-Chair

Tom Westdyk

Investment Committee Chair

Jill Wrobel

Treasurer

**The MRF welcomes
development
program leader:**

Dave Wiemer

Director of Philanthropy

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melanoma.org/board

Meet the entire staff at:
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report online:



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