MRF Melanoma Research Foundation
Cure Ocular Melanoma



Dear CURE OM Community,

As the summer months wind down, we are excited to share the latest updates from the CURE OM initiative including recaps of this year's Eyes on a Cure: OM Patient & Caregiver Symposium and several informative Ask the Expert webinars. This issue also highlights ways in which you can participate in OM research and community events.

The **25th Annual New York Gala** takes place on Thursday, October 15, from 6:00–10:00pm at Guastavino's in New York City. This milestone celebration will honor OM patient **Sara Corado** with the Courage Award and **Dr. Miguel A. Materin** with the CURE OM Vision of Hope Award.

August is also **National Eye Exam Month** -- a timely public health reminder about the importance of regular eye exams and early detection. Encourage those you love to schedule their annual exam today.

We're grateful to be in a community with you and look forward to the months ahead.

Learn more about the CURE OM initiative **here**.

With gratitude,
Caroline Glavin
Education Program Manager – Rare Melanoma Subtypes

Reflections from the Eyes on a Cure: OM Patient and Caregiver Symposium



This April, the MRF's CURE OM initiative convened patients, caregivers and leading experts for our 15th annual Eyes on a Cure: OM Patient and Caregiver Symposium, hosted at Bascom

Palmer Eye Institute and Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center in Miami, FL.

Over the course of the weekend, attendees heard from specialists across ophthalmology, oncology and genetics -- covering treatment and radiation management, evolving protocols for protecting vision after radiation, and the latest on genetics and inherited risk, including BAP1 and the emerging role of MBD4. Sessions on metastatic disease and treatment options were followed by a rich panel discussion on tissue donation, biobanking and the importance of community advocacy and funding for OM research. A keynote from Jonathan Davis, a metastatic OM community member, offered hard-won wisdom and a powerful reminder of why this work matters.

But the weekend was about more than information. It opened with a moment of remembrance, honoring community members lost in the past year. Support groups gave patients, caregivers and metastatic patients their own dedicated space to connect. And it closed -- as tradition holds -- with a Miami Marlins game, in memory of those who loved it and those still with us.

Thanks to generous scholarship support from the Miller and Zubeck families, dedicated in honor of Lindsay Zubeck, a beloved cornerstone of the OM community who passed away in December 2025, many were able to attend who might not otherwise have made the trip.

In case you missed this year's event, you can now view all session recordings **here**. We are also excited to share our recently launched 2026 Eyes on a Cure Recap video which captures the excitement and community fostered at each symposium. Click **here** to take a look today.

Finally, we are excited to announce that next year's symposium will be held April 16-18 in Denver, CO. Stay tuned for registration details! If you're interested in being part of the planning committee, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to us at **cureom@melanoma.org**.

View Recorded Sessions

In the News

New Research Identifies Protein That Helps Eye Cancer Spread to the Liver

A new study from Moffitt Cancer Center has identified GDF15, a protein secreted by uveal melanoma cells, as a key driver of liver metastasis in ocular melanoma patients. The research found that GDF15 disrupts liver support cells and promotes the growth of new blood vessels that feed tumors -- and that blocking the protein in animal models resulted in fewer and smaller liver tumors. For patients with high-risk (class 2) uveal melanoma, who currently have no FDA-approved options to prevent liver spread, this finding points to a promising new therapeutic target.

This study was led by Dr. Keiran Smalley, Director of the Donald A. Adam Comprehensive Melanoma Research Center of Excellence at Moffitt and MRF Scientific Review Officer.

Click below to read the full release.

Read Full Release

New NCCN Guidelines Offer Updated Roadmap for Uveal Melanoma Care

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) released updated guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment and surveillance of uveal melanoma -- and Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Arun Singh, Director of Ophthalmic Oncology at the Cole Eye Institute, is breaking down what they mean in practice. The guidelines introduce a structured approach to evaluating suspicious lesions, tailoring treatment by tumor size, and a new risk stratification framework that guides how closely patients are monitored for metastasis based on their tumor's molecular profile. Dr. Singh, a longtime collaborator of the MRF, presented these recommendations at the 2026 NCCN Annual Conference.

Read Full Article

New Resources from the MRF

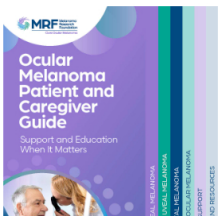
Animated Patient Video: Understanding Metastatic Uveal Melanoma

We're excited to share a new Animated Patient Video that breaks down metastatic uveal melanoma in an easy-to-understand way. The video explains how uveal melanoma can spread beyond the eye, why follow-up imaging and monitoring are important and the treatment options and supportive resources available to patients and caregivers as they navigate care choices.

Watch the animation, expert and patient videos **here**.

The **Questions to Ask Your Doctor Caregiver Guide** is designed for the ocular melanoma community and helps caregivers prepare for appointments with clear, practical questions about treatment, monitoring and care planning, while also offering guidance on caring for themselves along the way.

Ocular Melanoma Patient and Caregiver Guide





Our comprehensive Ocular Melanoma Patient and Caregiver Guide has been fully updated in collaboration with leading experts in the field. Whether you're newly diagnosed or further along in your journey, this guide walks through diagnosis, treatment options, managing side effects, follow-up care and emotional wellbeing -- all in one place. It's available to read online or download as a PDF, and printed copies can be requested by contacting us at **education@melanoma.org.**

Click below to read the OM guide.

Read OM Guide

ICYMI – View Recent Ask the Expert Webinars on Demand!

Each of the following sessions features expert insights and practical takeaways to help patients, caregivers and advocates better understand the evolving treatment landscape of ocular melanoma.

July 2026 – Ask the Expert: ***Accelerating Towards a Cure in Uveal Melanoma: The Adjuvant and Neoadjuvant Treatment Landscape***

Focused on the latest advances in adjuvant and neoadjuvant therapies for uveal melanoma, this session explored how treatments given before or after primary eye treatment are lowering the chances of cancer returning. A panel of leading uveal melanoma specialists, including Drs. Richard Carvajal, Ivana Kim, Kamaneh Montazeri, Miguel Materin and Shaheer Khan, walked attendees through emerging research, ongoing clinical trials, and what these advances mean for patients today. Watch the full webinar **here**.

June 2026 – Ask the Expert: ***Key Takeaways from ASCO 2026***

Dr. Hussein Tawbi of MD Anderson Cancer Center and Dr. Zeynep Eroglu of Moffitt Cancer Center joined the MRF to share highlights from the 2026 ASCO Annual Meeting most relevant to the ocular melanoma community. Key updates included early data on Afami-cel, an engineered T-cell therapy showing a 67% response rate in uveal melanoma patients who had progressed after prior treatment, and promising Phase 2/3 results on darovasertib plus crizotinib for patients with HLA-A*02:01-negative metastatic uveal melanoma, which showed a 58% reduction in risk of progression or death compared to standard immunotherapy. Watch the full webinar **here**.

Support Groups: Space for Connection



We invite you to participate in our upcoming CURE OM online support groups, which take place monthly:

- **Fourth Thursday of each month from 7:00 – 8:00 PM EST / 4:00 – 5:00 PM PST**

This evening group is open to all OM patients and caregivers and is facilitated by the MRF's Education Program Manager, Caroline Glavin, MSW.

This group is designed to foster emotional support, shared understanding and connection. Whether you're newly navigating an ocular melanoma diagnosis or have been living with it for years, this is a space to reflect, express feelings, explore coping strategies and find comfort in community.

For more information and to register, please reach out to **cureom@melanoma.org**.

CommUNITY Fundraising

Put the "fun" in fundraising with our CommUNITY Fundraising program! By raising life-saving funds, you too, can help make a difference in melanoma research. Ready to make a difference? Host your own CommUNITY Fundraiser and help support the fight against melanoma. Contact us at **volunteer@melanoma.org** to learn more and get started!

Learn More

Miles for Melanoma Season Is Underway — Join the Ocular Melanoma Community





The Miles for Melanoma season is off to an incredible start, and there's still plenty of time to get involved! Across the country, members of the OM community are coming together to form teams, honor loved ones, celebrate survivors and raise critical funds that fuel research, patient education and advocacy. Every team represents hope—and every dollar raised brings us one step closer to better treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

This season has already showcased the extraordinary impact of the OM community. In Washington, D.C., Team Cyclops and Team ImmPACT Makers raised more than $3,200, while in New England, Team Aura and Team Delcath contributed more than $2,100. Our Denver event saw Team Jo's Warriors, Team Peggy's Posse and Team Love You Carla raise over $7,400. Although our Chicago event was postponed due to poor air quality, Team Wrobel's Walkers and Brunswick Corporation still raised more than $15,400 in support of the OM community. Most recently, our Cleveland event welcomed Team Cure Ocular Melanoma and Team Ocular Melanoma Warriors for Scott Rinker, helping raise more than $2,200. Together, these teams demonstrate the power of a community united around a shared mission.

The season continues this fall with events in **Philadelphia, PA (August 22)**, **San Francisco, CA (August 30)**, **Twin Cities, MN (August 30)**, **New York, NY (September 19)**, **Morristown, NJ (September 27)**, **Los Angeles, CA (October 4)**, **Seattle, WA (October 4)**, **San Diego, CA (October 17)**, **Atlanta (November 8)** and Fort Myers (December 12).

Join the OM community this season. Start a team, raise awareness and help ensure every mile moves us closer to a cure.

Find a Miles for Melanoma 5K Near You

Research Updates:

New Report Highlights Progress in Ocular Melanoma Research

In October 2025, researchers, doctors and patient advocates gathered in Amsterdam for the CURE OM Global Science Meeting, hosted with the Melanoma Research Foundation. A summary of that meeting was just published in Pigment Cell & Melanoma Research, and here are a few highlights worth knowing about.

One of the most encouraging updates involved darovasertib, a drug used before surgery or radiation. In early studies, it shrank tumors in most patients treated, helping many avoid eye removal and reducing radiation needed near the vision, with some patients even seeing improved vision afterward.

Researchers also shared early progress on therapies that help the immune system better recognize and attack uveal melanoma tumors, an approach that's historically been difficult for this cancer type, along with newer tools for tracking how well treatments are working.

There's more work ahead, but this meeting reflects real momentum for our community.

Read the full report **here**!

Upcoming MRF Events:

August 22: Philadelphia Miles for Melanoma 5K

August 27: Ocular Melanoma Support Group (4th Thursday)

August 30: Twin Cities Miles for Melanoma 5K

August 30: San Francisco Miles for Melanoma 5K

September 19: 2026 MRIE Uveal Melanoma Patient & Caregiver Educational Symposium

September 19: New York Miles for Melanoma 5K

September 24: Ocular Melanoma Support Group (4th Thursday)

September 27: New Jersey Miles for Melanoma 5K



1420 K Street NW, 7th Floor Washington, DC 20005 | Tel: (202) 347-9675
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Melanoma Research Foundation

1420 K Street, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
(800) 673-1290 Office
(202) 347-9678 Fax

Contact Us

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Back to Top

The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is leading the melanoma community to transform melanoma from one of the deadliest cancers to one of the most treatable through research, education and advocacy.

The Melanoma Research Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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