MRF MELANOMA RESEARCH FOUNDATION



Chair's Welcome

From the desk of Douglas Brodman, Board Chair:

January marks the beginning of many things; a new year, a new Congress and a new administration. With the new year, we hope to forge new alliances within the patient advocacy community, strengthen our ties with state and federal lawmakers and continue to bring new advocates into the fold. Without question, despite the many things that will change with a new Washington, our commitment to the melanoma community remains the same.

Read on to find out what the MRF has been working on this fall and how you can become part of this dedicated group of advocates working to improve the lives of melanoma patients across the country.

Sincerely,

Douglas Brodman

Chair, Board of Directors

Advocacy Days - Registration Deadline is February 1





Registration is currently open for our 15th annual Advocacy Days in Washington, DC! Please join the MRF and other melanoma patients, caregivers and advocates on Capitol Hill as we engage with lawmakers on issues that affect the community. Click here to register before the **February 1 deadline**!

Congress Passes Continuing Resolution to Fund Government



On December 20, the U.S. House and Senate passed a second continuing resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriations to avert a government shutdown. The bipartisan resolution extends critical federal spending through March 14, 2025, at FY24 funding levels. President Biden officially signed the American Relief Act of 2025 into law on December 21, which included a key extension of expiring telehealth waivers that directly impact the melanoma community. While the originally negotiated package included pharmacy benefit manager reform and the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act, neither measure survived debate to scale back the original CR.

Telehealth Update - Flexibilities Extended Through March

As part of the recent bipartisan CR passed by Congress, Medicare telehealth flexibilities have been temporarily extended through March 14, 2025. This provision was set to expire on December 31, 2024 if not included in the year-end funding package. While only a 90-day extension, these flexibilities remain a lifeline for melanoma patients to access the care they need without the geographic and financial burdens of travelling to receive such care. The MRF will continue to work with our coalition partners, Congress and the new administration to ensure telehealth is a viable tool for the melanoma community for years to come.

MRF Testifies at NJ Senate Committee on Education Hearing for Sunscreen in Schools Bill



Photo: Kristina Derrick, MD, Saralan Campbell and Erika Tvedten

In December, the MRF's Saralan Campbell, Advocacy Coordinator, provided testimony in a New

Jersey Senate Committee on Education hearing in support of Senate Bill 1548. If passed, the bill would require school districts to adopt policies allowing student use of sunscreen and sun-protective clothing at any school-sponsored function. Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz sponsored the companion bill in the General Assembly.

Senator Shirley Turner, the bill's sponsor, remarked, "It's a very commonsense bill. We've heard stated multiple, several times now that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. And even though it's preventable, we're not doing enough to educate people in regard to the hazards of overexposure to sun without having protection. And this is one way that we can work to beat cancer in our lifetime as it relates to skin cancer."

MRF Participates in FDA Hearing on Over-the-Counter Drug Program



Just before the Thanksgiving holiday, the MRF's Director of Advocacy, Kim Wezik, testified on behalf of the melanoma community at the public hearing on recommendations for the Over-the-Counter Monograph Drug User Fee Program (OMUFA) Reauthorization at the FDA. Her testimony highlighted our collective goal of partnering with the FDA and Congress to ensure Americans have the tools they need to protect their skin and stay sun safe along with restoring public trust in the use of sunscreen as a cancer prevention tool. In doing so, we hope to advance effective sunscreen policies including alignment with international safety standards for sunscreen testing and approval of a wider range of filters for all types of skin.

Melanoma Matters Webinar



In recognition of National Rural Health Day, the MRF hosted a second webinar of our Melanoma Matters: Our Drive for Rural Health Equity Series this past November. Panelists, Claire Heyison from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Illinois State Representative Kelly Cassidy and Mark Holmes, PhD from the University of North Carolina's Rural Health Research and Policy Analysis Center led a thought-provoking discussion on the insurance cost barrier to melanoma patient care in rural communities. The full recording will soon be made available on the MRF's YouTube page. You can view our inaugural webinar here.

State Proclamations





WHEREAS, melanoma is a life-threatening form of skin cancer that can impact people of all races, ethnicities, and genders; and
WHEREAS, nearly 90% of cutaneous melanomas are related to excess exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light; and
WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2020 there were 2,504 new cases of melanoma diagnosed in Arizona, and 212 Arizonans died from the disease; and
WHEREAS, sun-safe behaviors, like avoiding being outside in the mid-afternoon, seeking shade, wearing sun protective clothing, and using broad-spectrum sunscreen can reduce the harmful effects of UV light exposure; and
WHEREAS, melanoma of the skin is largely treatable when detected early, but many Arizonans remain unaware of the signs and symptoms of this disease; and
WHEREAS, melanoma can occur on areas of the body that are not routinely exposed to sunlight, so all Arizonans should monitor their bodies for any new, changing, or unusual skin symptoms and seek medical care if they have concerns.
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Katie Hobbs, Governor of the State of Arizona, do hereby proclaim May 2024, as,

MELANOMA AWARENESS MONTH IN ARIZONA

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Arizona

GOVERNOR

DONE at the Capitol in Phoenix on this twenty-second day of April in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the Two Hundred and Forty-Eighth.
ATTEST:

SECRETARY OF STATE

Melanoma Awareness Month is fast approaching and now is the time to request that your governor declare May Melanoma Awareness Month in your state. For more information, reach out to advocacy@melanoma.org.

Become a Patient/Caregiver Advocate Grant Reviewer!



Since 2019, the MRF has incorporated a patient-centric approach into the grant review process. Submit your application here or email advocacy@melanoma.org with questions about this program or any of our scientific initiatives. Our patient review panel is made up of melanoma patients, caregivers, friends and family, with or without formal scientific training. In addition to ensuring that the melanoma patient's point of view is critically represented during the grant proposal process, this program also increases the pool of skilled melanoma patient representatives to participate in other scientific advisory committees at cancer centers or various drug development stakeholders such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Cancer Institute (NCI), Department of Defense (DoD), Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and partner organizations in the biotech/pharmaceutical field.

Learn More

In the News:

Senator Cory Booker (NJ) submitted a letter to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf expressing concern over the FDA's mandate requiring sunscreen manufacturers to test sunscreen on animals despite significant human data supporting the safety of sunscreen products. The MRF agrees with Senator Booker's stance urging the FDA to prioritize non-animal testing methods to ensure sunscreen safety and has heavily advocated for the United States to align with international safety standards for sunscreen filter approvals. You can read Senator Booker's press release here.

Upcoming Events:

March 2-4: Advocacy Days – Washington, DC

Together Against Melanoma: Patient and Caregiver Symposia Series

- **April 5**: Fred Hutch Cancer Center – Seattle, WA
- **April 7**: UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center – Chapel Hill, NC
- **April 26–27**: Cleveland Clinic CURE OM Symposium – Cleveland, OH
- **May 10**: The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Columbus, OH
- **May 17**: Mayo Clinic – Jacksonville, FL



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