MRF Melanoma Research Foundation

The Advocate Newsletter – July 2025

Chair's Welcome

From the desk of Douglas Brodman, Board Chair:

I've spent a lot of time thinking about the various issues affecting the melanoma community over the past few months and how this community has and will continue to navigate troubled waters. The word that keeps coming back to me is "engagement". This is undoubtedly the time to lean in. When you pick up the phone to call your lawmaker, or make a visit to their office, you establish a relationship with them as their constituent. You educate them on this disease, on the patient community, on emerging research, on how their votes impact everyday people. You hold them accountable to the communities they're elected to serve. You help them imagine a brighter tomorrow for their district.

We have a busy legislative season ahead, some of it encouraging and some concerning. So please, share our advocate sign up with your melanoma community and let's continue to grow our reach with policymakers so that when they make decisions, they do so having heard from the melanoma community.

Sincerely,



Douglas Brodman

Chair, Board of Directors

Defense-Funded Melanoma Research

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense (HAC-D) released its committee report at the beginning of June, detailing Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 allocations for the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). Unfortunately, the Melanoma Research Program (MRP) was not allocated dedicated funding. Instead, the report indicated that melanoma research will be pulled into the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP) along with 17 other cancers, competing for $180 million in funds.

In response, the MRF circulated a sign on letter to the House Appropriations Committee leadership urging them to restore the MRP's funding cut by the subcommittee. The letter included over 100 signatures from the medical research community as well as other patient advocacy organizations.

On June 12th, the full House Appropriations Committee held its markup of the Defense bill where ranking member of HAC-D, Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN-4) proposed an amendment that would restore funding to the programs defunded by the subcommittee – including $10 million for the MRP. Rep. McCollum pulled her amendment after agreement from Chair Tom Cole (R-OK-4) and HAC-D Chair Ken Calvert (R-CA-41) to secure additional funds for those programs when the appropriations package is conferenced with the Senate. The Senate's markups have yet to be released.

The MRF is closely monitoring any further developments with respect to the CDMRP as the FY26 deadline approaches.

View the Full Letter Here

Introduction of the SAFE Sunscreen Standards Act





The Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health markup hearing on July 16, 2025

Earlier this month, the Congressional Skin Cancer Caucus Co-Chairs, Reps. John Joyce, MD (R-PA-13), Dave Joyce (R-OH-14), Debbie Dingell (D-MI-6) and Deborah Ross (D-NC-2) introduced the Supporting Accessible, Flexible, and Effective (SAFE) Sunscreen Standards Act (H.R. 3686). This bipartisan legislation recognizes the urgent need to approve new sunscreen ingredients to ensure access to safe and effective sunscreen for all and was one of the MRF's legislative asks at our Advocacy Days event this past March. Additionally, the MRF's Director of Advocacy, Kim Wezik, testified before the House Energy & Commerce Committee in April on the need for these regulatory changes to be included in the Over-the-Counter Monograph User Fee Act (OMUFA) Reauthorization bill.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has failed to approve any new sunscreen filters since the 1990s. As a result, the U.S. remains woefully behind other countries in sunscreen accessibility. The SAFE Sunscreen Standards Act, if passed, would effectively streamline the FDA's review process, moving the FDA's approval process away from animal testing methods and create a better pathway for sunscreen ingredient approval.

Joined by many skin cancer advocates, the MRF attended the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health markup hearing on July 16. Encouragingly, many lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle remarked on the need for reforms to the FDA's review process.

On behalf of the melanoma community, we thank Rep. John Joyce, MD for his commitment to skin cancer prevention efforts by ensuring Americans have access to the most effective sunscreen ingredients. We are hopeful that the House Energy & Commerce Committee will pass the bill and that a companion bill will be introduced in the Senate soon.



Pictured: Kim Wezik, MRF Director of Advocacy, with Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI-6), Co-Chair of the Congressional Skin Cancer Caucus

The "Big Beautiful Bill" And What It Means For Melanoma



On July 4, President Trump signed HR 1, also known as the "Big Beautiful Bill", into law including sweeping cuts to public health insurance programs and healthcare marketplace insurance plan subsidies. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, at least 10.5 million people will lose access to Medicaid, health insurance for low-income Americans, and CHIP, health insurance for low-income children, by 2034 and the Kaiser Health Foundation estimates that number to reach 16 to 17 million when taking into account those

who will lose access due to provisions of the bill that reduce access to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), or Obamacare, marketplace subsidies.

A recent article published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology demonstrated the positive impact that Medicaid expansion, or raising the income threshold to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for Medicaid eligibility so that those earning too much to traditionally qualify for Medicaid but not enough to traditionally afford to purchase their own plan on the ACA marketplace could be eligible for Medicaid in states that opted to expand their Medicaid eligibility, had on detecting and treating melanomas at earlier stages. Access to health insurance leads melanoma patients to detecting and treating their melanoma in its earliest and most survivable stages. Like many patient advocacy organizations, the MRF is deeply concerned that this bill will undo decades of progress for patients and lead to loss of coverage, delayed care, and needless loss of life.

While this bill has been signed into law by President Trump, the MRF is continuing to look for solutions to restore access to care for melanoma patients and encourages the melanoma community to share their Medicaid stories with their lawmakers.



Save the Date for 2026 Advocacy Days: March 1–3, 2026 | Washington, DC

Join melanoma patients, caregivers, advocates and supporters from across the country for the 2026 MRF Advocacy Days. Help advance melanoma advocacy by connecting with lawmakers on Capitol Hill and sharing your story.

Registration opens soon, stay tuned and check back on our event page.

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