MRF Melanoma Research Foundation



Every June, National Cancer Immunotherapy Month highlights one of the most important advances in modern cancer care: harnessing the body's own immune system to fight cancer.

Few cancers have benefited more from immunotherapy than melanoma. Once considered one of the deadliest forms of skin cancer when it spread beyond the skin, melanoma has become a remarkable success story in the oncology world. The breakthroughs achieved in melanoma research not only transformed outcomes for melanoma patients but also paved the way for immunotherapy treatments that are now helping patients with lung cancer, kidney cancer, bladder cancer, head and neck cancer, liver cancer and many other malignancies.

For many patients, immunotherapy has turned what was once a rapidly fatal disease into a cancer that can be controlled for years—turning survivors into thrivers with no evidence of disease.

Melanoma became one of the first proving grounds for immune checkpoint inhibitors because melanoma tumors are often highly visible to the immune system. Researchers studying why some melanoma patients experienced remarkable responses helped uncover fundamental principles of cancer immunology.

Recent MRF-funded projects in innovative immunotherapy research will continue to benefit patients and advance knowledge in this field.

For example, this year, the MRF funded a Team Science Award led by Dr. James Mulé focused on "Harness Nanochemical Design to Elevate STING-Based Melanoma Immunotherapy." STING-targeted therapies are an exciting area of immuno-oncology research designed to stimulate powerful anti-tumor immune responses.

While immunotherapy has transformed care, not every patient responds. MRF-funded projects are also exploring why resistance develops and how it can be overcome. Recent awards have supported research into RNA-based therapeutics for resistant melanoma and strategies to improve anti-tumor immune responses.

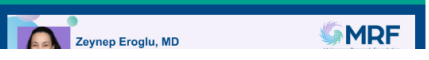
The story of immunotherapy in melanoma is one of the most encouraging examples of how research can transform patient outcomes.

To continue reading and learn more about immunotherapy, click here.

Support Our Researchers

Kyleigh LiPira, MBA

CEO



Key Takeaways from ASCO – Advances in Cutaneous & Rare Melanoma Subtypes



Every year, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meeting brings together researchers from around the world to share the newest findings in cancer care. For people affected by melanoma, these updates can offer something incredibly important: hope.

The MRF held a webinar featuring Dr. Hussein Tawbi of MD Anderson Cancer Center and Dr. Zeynep Eroglu of Moffitt Cancer Center reviewing 9 important melanoma studies presented at ASCO 2026. Together, their presentations highlighted a promising message: researchers are continuing to make progress, even for patients whose melanoma has been difficult to treat. Click here to watch the full webinar!

Read Our Full ASCO Blog Recap



The FDA Approves New Sunscreen Ingredient – BEMT

(Left to Right: Sara Campbell, MRF; Roberto Sada, Kenvue; Congressman John Joyce (PA-13); and Kim Wezik, MRF)

This month marked a historic achievement for public health, consumer access and prevention. For the first time in more than two decades, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced approval of a new sunscreen filter, bemotrizinol (known as BEMT). BEMT is a chemical sunscreen filter that has been approved and available in European and Asian SPF formulas. The approval denotes long-overdue progress that is essential to reducing harmful UV exposure, a leading and preventable cause of skin cancer. US sunscreen manufacturers can begin including BEMT as an active filter ingredient beginning August 9, 2026.

Alongside our advocacy partners including the PASS Coalition and several dedicated melanoma advocates, the MRF has strongly promoted approval of new sunscreen filters such as BEMT to modernize sunscreen options available to US consumers and to expand access to safe and effective UV protection. We are grateful to the Congressional Skin Cancer Caucus, especially co-chair Rep. John Joyce, MD, FAAD (PA-13) who played an instrumental role in the passage of the SAFE Sunscreen Act of 2025 that ultimately led to BEMT's approval.

While this is a monumental step towards sun safe progress, our community will continue to advocate for the adoption of wholistic sun safe behaviors to prevent cumulative UV damage.

Learn More

Education Corner

Celebrating Men's Health Awareness Month



June is Men's Health Month and serves as an opportune moment to highlight that while melanoma doesn't discriminate based on gender, research demonstrates that men are more likely to be diagnosed with melanoma at later stages and have higher mortality rates than women.

This year, an estimated 112,000 new cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in the US – approximately 65,400 (~60%) in men and 46,000 (~40%) in women. One factor contributing to the difference in outcomes is that men are significantly less likely to engage in sun safe prevention behaviors such as the daily use of SPF 30+ sunscreen and the use of wide brimmed hats, eye protective wear and UPF protective clothing. Men are also less likely than women to see dermatologists for routine skin checks. Research also indicates that gendered norms contribute to less adoption of sun safe behaviors in men. For instance, men are more likely to describe sunscreen as useful only for cosmetic benefit and therefore do not regularly apply sunscreen.

All month, we have shared testimonials from male melanoma patients and thrivers who utilize their platforms to highlight the importance of early detection and encourage men to embrace sun safe behaviors. We are honored to work with Captain Jason Chambers, Superyacht Captain, Star of Bravo's Below Deck Down Under and melanoma advocate as this year's #GetNaked melanoma

awareness spokesperson. Through this campaign, Jason continues to encourage all, especially men, to understand the risks associated with increased UV exposure without imploring sun safety. Read more about his story and encourage the men in your life to prioritize their skin health.

Prevention is Key

RSVP for our Upcoming Ask the Expert Webinars



Join us on July 7 for our upcoming Ask the Expert webinar, Accelerating Towards a Cure in Uveal Melanoma: The Adjuvant and Neoadjuvant Treatment Landscape, where leading uveal melanoma specialists will discuss the latest advances in treatments designed to reduce the risk of recurrence before or after primary treatment. While radiation and surgery are highly effective at controlling uveal melanoma in the eye, researchers are working to better understand how these additional therapies may help improve long-term outcomes.

Following a 30-minute panel discussion, attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions directly to the experts and learn what these exciting developments mean for patients today and in the future.

Join us virtually on July 7 from 7:00–8:00 PM ET.

Register Today



Join us on July 30 for our upcoming Ask the Expert webinar, The Evolving Role of ctDNA in Melanoma Treatment and Surveillance, featuring melanoma expert Dr. Vincent Ma and melanoma patient advocate Michael Wilson. Together, they will explore how tumor-informed ctDNA testing is being used in melanoma care, including its role in monitoring treatment response, identifying measurable residual disease (MRD), detecting recurrence and helping guide clinical decision-making.

Dr. Ma will share the latest research and real-world case studies, while Michael will discuss his personal experience navigating stage III melanoma, recurrence and ongoing ctDNA surveillance. Following the discussion, attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with the speakers during a live Q&A session.

Join us virtually on July 30 from 7:00–8:30 PM ET and learn more about this rapidly evolving area of melanoma research and care.

Register Today

Denver Miles for Melanoma Donor Highlight



Sibby Dawson from Team On Your Marks Shares Why She Participates in the Denver Miles for Melanoma 5K

This month, our Denver Miles for Melanoma 5K event broke goal and raised over $118,000 for the melanoma community. Sibby Dawson from Team On Your Marks shares why

she participates:

"My participation in the Miles for Melanoma Denver event is simple...it is my dad. He fought a brave 4.5-year battle against melanoma and passed away from the disease in 2018. He was originally diagnosed with stage IV and given 6 months to live, but thanks to a trial he got 4 additional years of good quality time with us. Therefore, I have seen firsthand the benefits of science, research and drugs like those funded by the MRF. This will be my 12th year of team On Your Marks in honor of my dad, and we have raised over $100,000 for the MRF. He was still alive for the first few years of my team and even made it to Denver for the event in 2017 which was so special and emotional for both of us. The team made him so happy and so proud and that filled my heart to the brim! I miss him every day and this purpose keeps me connected to him in a wonderful way. I will continue to raise money in his honor until there is a cure for this insidious disease."

Miles for Melanoma Season is in Full Swing!



The momentum is building, and we're just getting started! Thanks to our incredible participants, volunteers, sponsors and supporters, the Denver Miles for Melanoma event was a tremendous success. Be sure to relive the day and view event photos **here**.

Now, we're taking that energy across the country with upcoming Miles for Melanoma events in **Chicago, IL (July 19)**, **Cleveland, OH (August 2)**, **Philadelphia, PA (August 22)**, **Twin Cities, MN (August 30)**, **San Francisco, CA (August 30)**, **New York, NY (September 19)** and **Morristown, NJ (September 27)**, where our New Jersey community is celebrating their 20th Miles anniversary! Whether you're returning for another year or joining us for the first time, now is the perfect time to register, recruit teammates, start fundraising and earn exciting fundraising incentives along the way. Every step taken and every dollar raised helps fuel critical melanoma research, education and advocacy programs. Join us this summer and help move us closer to a future without melanoma.

Find a 5K Near You

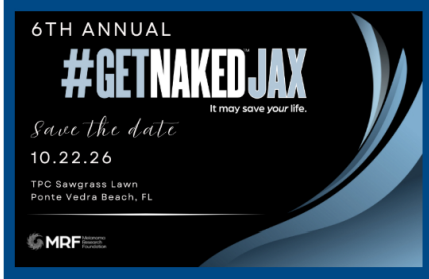
Celebrate 30 Years of Impact at the MRF's Milestone Gala Celebrations



This year, we're celebrating more than events, we're celebrating three decades of impact. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we're honored to bring our community together for two landmark gala evenings: the 15th Annual Denver Gala on September 24 and the 25th Annual New York Gala on October 15. These signature events will unite patients, survivors, caregivers, researchers, industry leaders and advocates for inspiring evenings dedicated to advancing the fight against melanoma. Guests will enjoy cocktail receptions, gourmet dining, meaningful storytelling and special recognition of individuals whose leadership, advocacy and generosity are helping drive progress for the melanoma community.

As we reflect on 30 years of breakthroughs and look ahead to the next generation of research, innovation and hope, we invite you to be part of these unforgettable celebrations. Join us in honoring how far we've come and in helping shape what's next. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available now. Reserve your place today and help us celebrate 30 years of progress for the melanoma community!

Purchase a Ticket or Sponsorship



Countdown to #GetNakedJax: 4 Months Until Jacksonville's Biggest Night for Melanoma Research

We're just 4 months away from the 6th Annual #GetNakedJax, and excitement is building for one of Jacksonville's most impactful nights with a purpose. Last year, this incredible community raised more than $340,000 to fund a Career Development Award at Thomas Jefferson

more than $240,000 to fund a Career Development Award at Thomas Jefferson University supporting breakthrough melanoma research exploring a revolutionary approach to trigger melanoma cells to self-destruct, adding to a total of more than $875,000 raised since 2021 to advance life-changing science. This year, we invite you to join us on the lawn at TPC Sawgrass for an unforgettable evening featuring inspiring stories, a lively reception and live entertainment from The Band Be Easy—all in support of funding the next critical research grant and moving us closer to a future without melanoma. Learn more about sponsorship opportunities below!

Learn More About Sponsorship Opportunities

Community SPOTlight: Local Events Making a Lasting Impact

In May, we proudly celebrated two incredible community-led events that raised awareness and critical funds to support the MRF's mission.

The second annual Melanoma Clinic Awareness Walk brought more than 100 participants together in Winter Park, Florida, for a day focused on education, advocacy and hope. The event raised an impressive $17,860 to support melanoma research and was made possible through the support of five generous sponsors: Natera, InformDX, SciBase, Castle Biosciences and the Florida Society of Dermatology PAs (FSDPA).

The impact of this event extends far beyond a single day. Funds raised through the 2025 Melanoma Clinic Awareness Walk helped support MRF funded research grants led by Amanda Zucker, MD, PhD, of Oregon Health & Science University and Jonathan Hwang, MD, of Brigham and Women's Hospital, advancing important work aimed at improving outcomes for melanoma patients.

We are grateful to the volunteers and participants who helped make the event such a success.





Families in Westfield, New Jersey, gathered for the second annual Melanoma Wiffleball Classic, hosted by Lauren Guberer in honor of her sister, Pam, who passed away from melanoma at just 39 years old. Co-hosted with Lindsay Bliss, founder of Westfield's Wiffleball League, the event welcomed approximately 100 families for a fun-filled day of friendly competition, community connection and sun safety education. Open to students in grades 2–8, the tournament featured support from local sponsors, generous product donations from sun safety partners and an opening ceremony where Lauren shared her sister's story and the importance of melanoma awareness. The event raised approximately $2,500 to support the MRF's research efforts.

If you are interested in hosting your own CommUNITY Fundraiser, click below!

Learn More

Upcoming Events

July 7: Ask the Expert: Accelerating Towards a Cure in Uveal Melanoma

July 19: Chicago Miles for Melanoma 5K

July 30: Ask the Expert: The Evolving Role of ctDNA in Melanoma Treatment and Surveillance

August 2: Cleveland Miles for Melanoma 5K

August 22: Philadelphia Miles for Melanoma 5K

August 30: Twin Cities Miles for

In the News

Melanoma Research Foundation Resources for Dermatology Clinicians - *Dermatology Times*

Resources from Clinicians from the Melanoma Research Foundation - *Dermatology Times*

Fox Chapel Woman's Battle with Melanoma included Immunotherapy - *Trib Live*

FDA Approves Bemotrizinol: First New Sunscreen Ingredient in 25 Years to Hit U.S. Market in 2026 - *Medical Daily*

ASCO 2026 News: Personalized mRNA-based Melanoma Vaccine

Melanoma 5K

August 30: San Francisco Miles for Melanoma 5K

September 19: New York Miles for Melanoma 5K

September 24: 15th Annual Denver Gala

September 26: Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins (Registration Opening Soon)

September 27: New Jersey Miles for Melanoma

October 15: 25th Annual New York Gala

November 14: Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center (Registration Opening Soon)

Plus Immunotherapy Slashes Risk of Recurrence and Death - *The Derm Digest*



melanoma.org

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