MRF Melanoma Research Foundation




## National Cancer Research Month



May is National Cancer Research Month, a time to highlight the importance of lifesaving research critical for those affected by cancer. At the MRF, enabling and supporting innovative research that leads to effective treatments and eventually a cure for melanoma is central to our mission and the work we do each and everyday.

When a melanoma patient founded the MRF in 1996 out of concern for the lack of treatment options for melanoma patients, the FDA had approved only 3 drugs which resulted in a 5%-10% survival rate for patients with metastatic disease. Today, I am proud of the tremendous progress we've made through innovative developments with therapeutics such as immunotherapy and targeted therapy which have resulted in a resounding 20 FDA approved treatments today. These drugs treat 31 melanoma indications in adult and pediatric patients, including 2 specifically approved for metastatic uveal melanoma. Collectively, these treatments have improved the 10-year survival for patients living with metastatic cutaneous melanoma 10-fold (from 5% to at least 50%). While this progress is tremendous, we know there is still more innovation needed to further treatment options for all patients, including those living with the rarer melanoma subtypes.

At the MRF, we are closely monitoring this administration and advocating at the federal level to protect and extend research funding programs through the Department of Defense and Centers for Disease Control. It is now more important than ever that we support the research and science community to enable the next wave of treatment progress. To date, the MRF has funded over $26 million in research grants, and we can't continue to support life-saving research without YOU. During National Cancer Research Month, we encourage you to pledge a donation and help advance options for our community. Visit the research and science section of our website to learn more about the MRF's program.

Kyleigh LiPira, MBA

MRF CEO

## #GetNaked – Melanoma Awareness Month




All month, the MRF has honored the melanoma community and highlighted melanoma awareness and prevention through our Melanoma Awareness Month #GetNaked campaign. This year's campaign featured celebrity esthetician, podcast host, key opinion leader, melanoma advocate and our 2024 NYC Gala Influencer Awardee, Ian Michael Crumm as the campaign spokesperson. Ian's signature tagline, "protected skin wins", is a true testament to his mission of utilizing his platform to ensure ALL are aware of the importance of skin protection and sun safety. As 93% of cutaneous (skin) melanomas are considered preventable, one of the only cancer types to be largely preventable, this message is key to lowering incidence rates across all ethnicities and backgrounds.

We were honored to share and reflect on inspirational patient stories like that of mucosal melanoma patient Shelley Belanger, 2023 #GetNaked spokesperson Teddi Mellencamp, melanoma thriver Amy Nichole and Stage IIIB patient, Kora Kane. Their stories shine a light on the strength and resilience of the melanoma community and are a true testament to the importance of embracing sun safe practices, raising awareness around prevention and the critical need for early detection.

Though #GetNaked may conclude in just a couple days, sun safety is an important year-round message. As is the need to help fund the future to enable more treatment options for this community.

**"Melanoma doesn't care how old you are, how healthy you are, or what plans you've made - but research does. Donate to the Melanoma Research Foundation today—because breakthroughs save lives," says Kora Kane.**

We encourage you to continue donating to help cultivate the next treatment breakthrough because... Progress is Power!

**Donate Now**

## Melanoma Research Spotlight & Updates



### Highlights from the AACR Conference

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) held its annual meeting April 25–30, and the MRF was proud to attend virtually to follow the latest developments in melanoma research.

In a new blog post, MRF Chief Scientific Officer Bonnie Teng, PhD, shares key takeaways, from promising strategies to prevent melanoma from spreading to new insights into overcoming treatment resistance.

While advances in immunotherapy and targeted therapy continue to improve outcomes, researchers also emphasized the urgent need to understand how resistance develops and how to stop it. These innovative and exciting research updates could pave the way for key findings in the fight against melanoma.

**Read AACR Blog Recap**

### MRF Research Grant Update:

A recent study led by Emily Bernstein, PhD, a 2022 MRF Established Investigator Award (EIA) recipient, is shedding new light on how melanoma spreads to the brain.

Dr. Bernstein and her team at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai discovered that mutations in a group of proteins known as PBAF can trigger melanoma cells to switch on brain-like genes—potentially helping the cancer spread to the brain.

"This study revealed an unexpected role for the PBAF chromatin remodeling complex function in keeping genes involved in neuronal function shut off in melanoma cells. The PBAF complex is highly mutated in melanoma, and patients with such mutations display a synaptic gene expression program that is associated with melanoma brain metastasis." - Emily Bernstein, PhD

Published in Molecular Cell, this MRF-funded research offers important insights that may lead to better prediction and treatment of brain metastases in melanoma patients.

**Read More**

## Education Corner




### Ask the Expert Recap: Understanding Melanoma: Risk Factors, Screening & Sun Safety

During our May Ask the Expert webinar, a panel of leading dermatologists shared key insights on melanoma risk factors, including UV exposure, family history and mole patterns. They emphasized the life-saving impact of prevention and early detection through regular skin checks, screenings and sun safety practices like avoiding tanning beds and using SPF 30+ sunscreen.

**Watch the Full Webinar Here**

### Highlights from The Ohio State and Mayo Clinic Patient & Caregiver Symposia




Thank you to everyone who joined us this month for our Together Against Melanoma: Patient & Caregiver Symposia in collaboration with The Ohio State University and Mayo Clinic!

These impactful events brought together patients, caregivers and experts from across the melanoma community to discuss the latest advancements in treatment and research and share valuable resources. These events helped build meaningful support networks for our patient community and we're especially grateful to those who shared their personal stories and to the outstanding medical professionals who led such informative sessions.

We're so thankful to everyone who helped make these events possible. Stay tuned for our next patient symposium happening this fall!

**The Ohio State University Photo Album**

**Mayo Clinic Photo Album**

## Exploring the Long-Term Psychosocial Impacts of Stage IV Melanoma in Survivors

A recent study examined the lasting psychological and physical effects faced by long-term survivors of stage IV melanoma. While survival rates have significantly improved thanks to immunotherapy and targeted treatments, many survivors continue to experience fatigue, skin issues and emotional distress, highlighting the need for ongoing mental health support and care. Read more here.




**The recent 14th Annual Eyes on a Cure: Ocular Melanoma Patient & Caregiver Symposium** was a wonderful opportunity to bring together patients, survivors, caregivers and clinicians to discuss recent developments in the ocular melanoma community. Eyes on a Cure was a true testament to the strength of the OM community.

We're excited to relive the impactful moments that made it so special including powerful educational sessions and heartfelt testimonials with our full event recap.

View Photos from Eyes on a Cure

**Read the Event Recap Here**

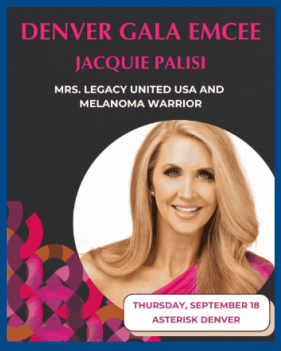
## Miles for Melanoma Kicks Off with Over $280K Raised—And We're Just Getting Started!




Miles for Melanoma is off to an incredible start! We kicked off this year's season with amazing energy in Washington, DC (May 3) and New England, MA (May 10), and thanks to our dedicated community, these events have already raised an incredible $283,699 in support of melanoma research, education and advocacy. Don't miss the highlight reel from DC—check it out here!

Next up, we're heading to Denver, CO (June 14), Chicago, IL (July 20), Cleveland, OH (August 3), Twin Cities, MN (August 10) and Philadelphia, PA (August 23). Start building your team today and unlock exciting fundraising incentives along the way. We can't wait to see you on the course—let's keep the momentum going!

**Learn More**




## Jacquie Palisi Headlines as our Denver Gala Emcee!

We are thrilled to announce that Mrs. Legacy United USA and melanoma warrior, Jacquie Palisi, will take the stage as emcee for our 14th Annual Denver Gala on September 18 at Asterisk Denver! Join us for an unforgettable evening dedicated to honoring the strength of the melanoma community and advancing the path to a cure. This meaningful night will celebrate the resilience of patients, the dedication of caregivers and the groundbreaking work of clinicians—all while raising essential funds to fuel innovative melanoma research and treatment. Be part of the progress. Click below to purchase tickets, explore sponsorships or learn more.

**Purchase a Ticket or Sponsorship**

**Purchase a Ticket Today for our 24th Annual New York Gala!**




You're invited to the 24th Annual New York Gala—an unforgettable evening of purpose and celebration. Join us on Thursday, October 30 at the iconic Cipriani Broadway as we come together to honor the melanoma community and raise vital funds for research, education and advocacy. The evening will feature a stylish cocktail reception, gourmet dinner, open bar, live entertainment and an auction with exclusive items and experiences. Cap off the night with an inspiring awards ceremony recognizing the individuals making a powerful impact in the fight against melanoma. Mark your calendars and be part of a night that changes lives—because together, we can create a future without melanoma.

**Purchase a Ticket or Sponsorship**



**Take Action to Protect Federal Melanoma Research and Prevention Efforts**

Our collective voice is more important than ever. We encourage you to take action with two ongoing federal legislative campaigns to protect access to lifesaving melanoma research, prevention and treatment programs.

**We're calling on Congress to:**

Right now, Congress is making the federal budget for FY26. Call your lawmakers and ask them to Preserve $40 million for the Department of Defense's Melanoma Research Program (MRP) in the FY26 federal budget, an essential investment in melanoma research through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).

**Preserve $40 Million for the CDMRP's Melanoma Research Program**

Earlier this month, the President's FY26 budget request to Congress was released. If passed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Skin Cancer Prevention Program would be eliminated, putting all federal skin cancer prevention efforts to an end. Call on your lawmakers and urge them to restore $6 million in funding for this lifesaving program.

**Protect the CDC's Skin Cancer Prevention Program**

Join us and make a difference. Contact your lawmakers today and help us spread the word by sharing with your friends and family.

**Sign Up for Action Alerts**

## Upcoming Events

**June 14:** Denver Miles for Melanoma

**July 20:** Chicago Miles for Melanoma

**August 3:** Cleveland Miles for Melanoma

**August 10:** Twin Cities Miles for Melanoma

**August 23:** Philadelphia Miles for Melanoma

**September 18:** 14th Annual Denver Gala

## In the News

Melanoma Awareness Month: meet 2025's #GetNaked spokesperson - *Yahoo Creators*

Sun-Safety Tips from Ian Michael Crumm (For Melanoma Awareness Month) - *Blueprint*

Mount Sinai Researchers Discover How Melanoma May Spread to the Brain - *Mount Sinai*

Melanoma Research Foundation and Glowbar Join Forces to Fight Skin Cancer - *Dermatology Times*

Below Deck star reveals hidden

**October 16**: 5th Annual #GetNakedJax

**October 30**: 24th Annual New York Gala

battle with cancer... and the sign he ignored because he was 'naive' - *Daily Mail*

Social Media Offers Both Promise and Risk in Promoting Skin Cancer Prevention - *Managed Healthcare Executive*

Ian Michael Crumm shares sun safety tips for Melanoma Awareness MonthSigns of Skin Cancer & Prevention - *CBS Austin*

Routine skin check turns to nightmare as woman leaves with gaping hole in her face -*NBC Chicago*

Melanoma Prevalence and Misconceptions: Keeping You and Your Family Sun Safe - *Future of Personal Health*

Glowbar teams up with the Melanoma Research Foundation - *Fox 5*

#GetNaked for Skin Cancer Awareness Month - *Pix11*

MRF Melanoma Research Foundation

melanoma.org

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

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**About the MRF**

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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