MRF Melanoma Research Foundation



The Power of Giving Tuesday: Your Gift, Matched for Maximum Impact



As we enter the season of gratitude and generosity, the Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is reminded of the profound strength of this community—survivors, caregivers, advocates and allies—who stand with us in the fight against the deadliest form of skin cancer. **Giving Tuesday** is a celebration of that strength, a moment when people worldwide join together to uplift the causes closest to their hearts. For the melanoma community, it is a powerful reminder that *hope is something we build—together.*

This year, your support carries even greater importance. With ongoing uncertainty around federal research funding, the need for community-driven investment in melanoma science, patient support and advocacy has never been more urgent. Families facing melanoma cannot afford delays in discovery. Patients navigating complex diagnoses depend on new options—because **options bring hope**, and hope saves lives.

That is why we are thrilled to share an extraordinary opportunity:

From #GivingTuesday through December 31, every donation to the MRF will be matched—dollar for dollar—up to the first $35,000.

Two donors feel so strongly about our mission they want your donation to have double the impact. Your gift on Giving Tuesday does twice the good. It accelerates groundbreaking research. It fuels education and prevention efforts nationwide. It ensures patients and caregivers have access to trusted information and life-changing support. And it amplifies our advocacy to protect and expand research funding at the federal level.

Most importantly, your contribution ensures the MRF can continue delivering on its mission—because **every mission dollar comes directly from the community we serve.** The progress we've made over the past three decades is a testament to people like you: people who believe in

science, in survivorship and in shaping a future where melanoma no longer threatens the lives we love.

This Giving Tuesday, stand with us. Share our message. Support our mission. And double your impact knowing your generosity will go twice as far for the melanoma community.

Together, we give. Together, we hope. Together, we make a difference for patients.

Kyleigh LiPira, MBA

CEO

Share Your Story on Capitol Hill at Advocacy Days!



Registration is now open for Advocacy Days, taking place March 1–3 in Washington, DC. Join melanoma patients, caregivers, advocates, researchers and supporters from across the country as we come together to share stories, meet with lawmakers and champion policies that improve outcomes for the community.

By lending your voice, you can help shape a brighter future for melanoma patients and their loved ones. Sharing your story raises awareness on Capitol Hill and underscores the critical importance of ensuring melanoma voices like yours, are heard.

Register today and make your voice count.

Register Today!

Congress Passes Sunscreen Approval Reform Bill



(Pictured: Kim Wezik, MRF's Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, testifying before Congress in April during the Over-the-Counter Monograph User Fee Act (OMUFA) hearing)

As part of the House's vote to end the government shutdown on November 12, the Over-the-Counter Monograph User Fee Act (OMUFA), including important provisions related to new sunscreen filter approvals, also passed. In the legislation, Congress has directed the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to consider real world evidence when appropriate for assessing sunscreen filter safety, create pathways to move away from animal testing and reiterate the important role of broad-spectrum sunscreens in skin cancer prevention. The bill was signed by President Trump on November 12.

The MRF has been active in working to advance this issue with federal lawmakers having made comments at FDA hearings on OMUFA reauthorization and testifying before Congress last April. We applaud lawmakers for working across the aisle to increase access to sunscreens and thank our advocates for joining us in this effort.



Honoring our Veterans: Protecting the Melanoma Community

(Pictured: Joe Leonelli, US Navy veteran and melanoma advocate)

Earlier this month, we took a moment to honor the brave men and women who serve our nation courageously. Melanoma impacts our armed forces more than civilians. Military members have a 62% greater chance of melanoma incidence; veterans have an 18% higher risk of a stage 3 melanoma diagnosis and a 13% higher risk of a stage 4 melanoma diagnosis. The MRF is committed to supporting our service members and melanoma research by advocating at the federal level for funding through the Department of Defense's Melanoma Research Program (MRP), part of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). This funding is critical and helps our research community identify innovative therapies and treatments that extend options and hope for melanoma patients and their loved ones.

US Navy Veteran and melanoma advocate Joe Leonelli shares, "Ten years ago, I was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic melanoma while serving in the US Navy. I received five different immunotherapies and chemotherapies which have contained my cancer. These novel therapies did not exist 15 years ago and would not exist today without awareness of and funding for cancer research. This research literally saved my life and motivated me to advocate on behalf of cancer patients and members of our great military. Progress is Power!"

We take a moment to not only thank our veterans, but to also honor them with our pledge to continue supporting research.

Support Life-Saving Research

Education Corner

Join Us for a Virtual Patient and Caregiver Symposium



Registration is now open for "What's New in Melanoma Management 2025," an educational event designed to support melanoma patients and caregivers. On Saturday, December 13, from 10:00am – 12:00pm CT, experts from MD Anderson Cancer Center will share the latest updates in cutaneous melanoma diagnosis, treatment and supportive care.

This symposium offers the opportunity to learn from leading clinicians and explore tools and resources that can support you at any stage of the melanoma journey.

Register Now!

Ask The Expert: LAG-3 Inhibitors: Exploring a New Path in Melanoma Treatment



Curious about the latest melanoma treatments and how new therapies may offer more effective pathways through care? Our upcoming Ask the Expert webinar will explore LAG-3 inhibitors, an emerging and promising approach in melanoma treatment.

In this session, John Kirkwood, MD, Distinguished Service Professor of Medicine and Usher Professor of Medicine, Dermatology and Translational Science at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, will explain how LAG-3 inhibitors work in the body and how they differ from other treatment approaches.

Register Now!



24th Annual New York Gala Recap



New York, we cannot thank you enough for making our 24th Annual Gala unforgettable! Thanks to your incredible generosity, we're now just $60,000 away from reaching our $1.2 million goal, a powerful reminder that Progress is Power.

Funds from this year's event will help support a two-year Established Investigator Award to Dr. Craig Ceol of UMass Chan Medical School, whose groundbreaking research aims to block a tumor growth pathway that could help overcome immunotherapy resistance and bring new hope to patients who urgently need more treatment options.

Your support fuels the discoveries that change lives. If you didn't get a chance to give or want to help push us even further, there's still time to make a meaningful, tax-deductible gift. Click below to donate today!

Help us Reach our Goal!



Step Into the Final Stretch of Our Miles for Melanoma 5K Season

We're approaching the finish line of our Miles for Melanoma 5K season with only FOUR events to go including two brand-new stops in Tampa Bay and Orange County! Don't miss your chance to join the action in Tampa Bay, FL (Dec 6), Fort Myers, FL (Dec 13), Miami, FL (Feb 8) and Orange County, CA (Feb 22).

Sign up today, rally your team and start elevating melanoma awareness and earning amazing fundraising rewards. Every step you take fuels the fight against melanoma. Let's come together and stride toward a future free from melanoma, register now and make a meaningful impact!

Register Today!

Recognizing Excellence in Melanoma Research



(Pictured from left to right: Liz Patton, PhD, Joanna Poźniak, PhD, MRF CEO Kyleigh Lipira and MRF Chief Scientific Officer Bonnie Teng, PhD)



(Pictured from left to right: Liz Patton, PhD, MRF CEO Kyleigh LiPira, MRF Chief Scientific Officer Bonnie Teng, PhD and Simone Lubrano, PhD)

We are proud to recognize two outstanding researchers honored at this year's Society for Melanoma Research (SMR) International Congress.

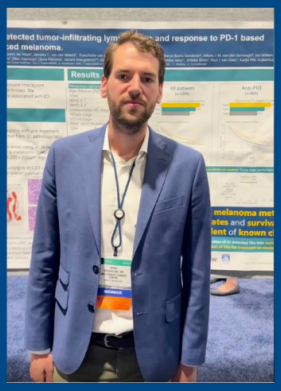
Dr. Simone Lubrano, PhD (University of Pisa, Italy and UCSF), received the Christopher J. Marshall Award for his recent achievements and publications, including the Cancer Cell paper, "FAK inhibition combined with the RAF-MEK clamp avutometinib overcomes resistance to targeted and immune therapies in BRAF V600E melanoma."

Dr. Joanna Poźniak, PhD (VIB-KU Leuven, Laboratory for Molecular Cancer Biology, Belgium), was awarded the Young Investigator Award for her research accomplishments and her Cancer Discovery publication, "Cytotoxic NK Cells Impede Response to Checkpoint Immunotherapy in Melanoma with an Immune-excluded Phenotype."

These awards underscore the MRF's commitment to advancing melanoma science and supporting the next generation of leaders driving innovation and progress in the field.

Learn More About MRF-Funded Research

MRF ASCO Awardee Advances AI Insights in Melanoma Treatment Response



(Pictured: Mark Schuiveling, MD, PhD)

The 2025 MRF American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Best Poster Awardee Mark Schuiveling, MD, PhD from the UMC Utrecht University recently published the study he presented at ASCO. Dr. Schuiveling's research shows that an artificial intelligence (AI) model can predict how well patients with advanced skin cancer (melanoma) will respond to immunotherapy. The AI detects a type of immune cells, called tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs), from routine tumor biopsies. Dr. Schuiveling discovered that patients with more of these TIL cells before treatment were more likely to respond well and live longer during the follow-up period of the study.

This research, part of a large national collaboration, could help oncologists personalize treatments more effectively and avoid unnecessary side effects (immune related adverse effects) in the future. Learn more here.

Watch: Dr. Schuiveling discuss research findings at ASCO 2025



Shining a Light on OM: The Impact of #EyeGetDilated

This year's #EyeGetDilated campaign centered on real experiences from the ocular melanoma community. By sharing patient stories and highlighting how routine dilated eye exams lead to earlier diagnosis and better outcomes, the campaign raises awareness and encourages people to make annual eye dilation part of their health routine.

Alongside these stories, #EyeGetDilated shares key OM resources and research updates, ensuring the campaign not only elevates OM voices but continues to build community, expand support and offer more tools for those navigating an OM diagnosis. Learn more about the MRF's CURE OM initiative, which works year-round to advance OM treatment and expand resources for the community.

Learn More

Upcoming Events

December 2: Ask the Expert: LAG-3 Inhibitors, Exploring a New Path in Melanoma Treatment

December 6: Tampa Bay Miles for Melanoma

December 13: Fort Myers Miles for Melanoma

February 8: Miami Miles for Melanoma

February 22: Orange County Miles for Melanoma

In the News

Cure Ocular Melanoma Meets in Amsterdam - *Stanford Medicine*

Multimodal AI and tumour microenvironment integration predicts metastasis in cutaneous melanoma- *Nature*

DecisionDx-Melanoma GEP Test Accurately Predicts SLN Positivity and Refines Recurrence Risk Assessment, New Data Shows - *Dermatology Times*

Melanoma Cancer Cluster Found in Parts of Pennsylvania - *The ASCO*

Post

A Closer Look at the Multidisciplinary Process of TILS for Melanoma - *Targeted Oncology*

Annual Miles for Melanoma, Your Next Step is the Cure - *Youtube*



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About the MRF

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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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