Dr. Marc Hurlbert Joins MRA as Chief Science Officer

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By Cody R. Barnett, MRA Director of Communications

Marc Hurlbert, PhD, has built his career advancing medical research in support of patients. For the better part of the last 20 years, he has helped accelerate the pace of scientific discovery in the areas of breast cancer, juvenile diabetes, and neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease. Now, as of this month, he will translate his skills, relationships, and enthusiasm to achieving our mission of ending death and suffering due to melanoma as MRA's chief science officer.

"I'm delighted to be moving into the field of melanoma, where there are so many exciting advancements happening," says Hurlbert.

Hurlbert, a pharmacologist by training, is responsible for guiding MRA's scientific strategy, overseeing the peer-reviewed grant-making program, and forging scientific collaborations. He succeeds Louise Perkins, PhD, who will retire from the role after serving MRA for more than five years.

"For me, the science really is what drew me. Melanoma research is leading the way. In fact, two classes of medications – targeted and immune-based therapies — were pioneered in melanoma — and that energy and momentum is driving all of oncology forward. It's a very exciting time." says Hurlbert.

This momentum is paying dividends to melanoma patients and their families. When MRA was founded more than 10 years ago, patients had access to just two FDA-approved medications, neither of which were very effective for most people. Today, patients diagnosed with late-stage disease have 12 new treatment options — all touched by MRA funded research — that have greatly improved outcomes.

"Despite all of this progress, MRA and its leadership have never lost sight of its mission to end suffering and ultimately cure this disease. This clarity is impressive and it seemed like a great fit for me," continues Hurlbert.

Hurlbert is also excited to explore and support additional research in the areas of early detection and prevention, areas that have been largely eclipsed by the need to fund research to better manage and treat melanoma. “We are at the point now where we can start to approach this from both directions — more effective and better tolerated treatment options WHILE helping people prevent recurrence and new melanomas altogether.”

Hurlbert began his tenure at MRA on November 1, 2018 and will transition with Perkins throughout February, 2019.

“I’m proud to join the MRA team and look forward to working with all stakeholders to advance the best science needed to end suffering and death due to melanoma.”

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