Physician-Scientists are Driven to Find Cures

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Who better to understand the urgent needs of cancer patients for new treatments and push that research in the lab? Physician-scientists, who are experts in both front-line care and cutting-edge science. Yet, fewer MDs are going into research because the career path is challenging and the remuneration lower than clinical practice.

The Damon Runyon Physician-Scientist Training Award seeks to reverse that trend by recruiting newly-minted MDs into research careers and providing them with the mentorship and funding they need to succeed, including help repaying medical school loans.

Current Physician-Scientist **Julia Carnevale, MD,** explains, “Without this award, I would not have had the opportunity to pursue my passion to find novel drug targets for my patients facing devastating diagnoses. I can look my patients in the eyes and tell them, I know that the treatment options we have right now aren’t good enough, but I am, along with so many others, working hard to find answers and better treatments.”

Two Damon Runyon Board Members, **Leon Cooperman and Michael Gordon**, provided the seed funding for this program. Now in its fourth year, we have 12 dedicated MDs from the top research institutions across the country treating patients, while building research careers in oncology. Physician-Scientist **Michael Drazer, MD,** describes the program as transformative for him. “Physician-scientists coming out of medical school face concerns about how to achieve independent research funding, how to develop one’s own research program, and how to continue to provide superb clinical care. On the other hand, are personal concerns about integrating work and life interests, managing substantial student loans, and being present for friends and family. The Physician-Scientist Training Award has allowed me to focus on the most crucial aspects of my professional and personal development.”

This month our esteemed award committee chose the 2018 awardees, brilliant scientists focusing on diverse research areas, including immunotherapy, lung cancer, Ewing sarcoma, and melanoma. Damon Runyon is committed to training and ensuring the success of these unique individuals. Stay tuned for the announcement!

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