Research Is Hope

Melanoma Research Alliance announces $8.2 million for new grant awards to advance melanoma research.

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By Cody R. Barnett, MRA Director of Communications

Since its founding in 2007, the Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) has played a pivotal role in the global response to melanoma. MRA has helped transform the landscape for melanoma research from minimal investment and activity to one of momentous excitement and breakthroughs. In its short history, MRA has invested more than $110 million in life-saving melanoma research.

“For so many patients and loved ones who have been affected by melanoma, research is hope,” said Debra Black cofounder and chair of MRA. “While progress is steadily being made, we won’t stop until we have cured melanoma. MRA-funded research is accelerating our progress toward better treatments and ultimately a cure for this disease.”

These new research awards come at a critical time, as rates of melanoma have doubled over the last 30 years. This year in the United States more than 96,000 people will be diagnosed with melanoma and over 7,000 people will succumb to the disease.

“While the explosive rate of new melanoma cases is alarming, I am encouraged by the reduced rate of mortality from melanoma. This is a testament to the vast progress we are making in the lab and in the clinic,” said MRA Chief Science Officer, Marc Hurlbert, PhD. “We still have a long way to go, but we are making headway. Additional investment in basic and clinical research is essential to keep the momentum.”

The newly selected research awards will address critical unmet needs in melanoma detection, prognostication and treatment. Five awards — three of which were generously funded by the Michael and Jacqueline Ferro Family Foundation — will investigate ways to better harness artificial intelligence to improve the early detection and prognosis of melanoma. Several other projects will examine novel drug targets, new treatment approaches for brain metastases, and ways to overcome targeted therapy resistance.

The new awards will support research at 28 institutions in seven countries, comprising 16 Established Investigators, 12 Young Investigators and five Pilot awards. The grants were selected by MRA’s Grant Review Committee through a diligent peer review process and confirmed by the MRA Board of Directors. The awards announced today bring MRA’s total investment in life-saving

melanoma research to over $110 million, in addition to $150 million in outside, leveraged funds.

“At MRA, we’ve seen our funded research translate to true real world improvements in the prevention, detection and treatment of melanoma. We have no doubt that these new awards will take us even closer to achieving our goal of ending pain and suffering due to melanoma,” said MRA President & CEO Michael Kaplan.

Read the press statement here.

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