

Watch Videos From the Melanoma Research Alliance's 2026 Patient Forum

Melanoma patients, survivors, health care experts and advocates share insights and state-of-the-art science about this skin cancer.

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By Renee Orcione, Associate Director, Communications and Engagement, at Melanoma Research Alliance

MRA's Melanoma Exchange Patient Forum, held in-person in Washington DC and virtually on February 25, 2026, brought together hundreds of melanoma patients, survivors, advocates, and their loved ones to provide lay-friendly, state-of-the-science education, promote collaboration, and provided networking opportunities across the melanoma community.

Throughout the event, participants heard from leading experts in the melanoma field and had the opportunity to ask questions, discuss, and network with other people who are going through their own melanoma journey. Each session provided information, insight, and strategies to help navigate melanoma diagnosis, treatment, or beyond.

This year's sessions covered clinical trials and emerging melanoma research, hereditary risk, prevention and early detection, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in melanoma care, patient and caregiver navigation, research powered by patient samples, and the importance of community and advocacy.

Session 1: Clinical Trials and Emerging Research in Melanoma

Get up to speed on what's next in melanoma research - and what it could mean for patients. Featuring Yana Najjar, MD, of UPMC, this session explores the latest clinical trials, breakthrough therapies, and emerging science shaping the future of melanoma care.

Session 2: Melanoma Risk Speed Talk: Hereditary Risk

Understanding hereditary melanoma risk can help patients and families take proactive steps. Josh Arbesman, MD, of Cleveland Clinic, explains the genetic factors linked to melanoma and what patients should know about family risk.

Session 3: Melanoma Prevention Speed Talk: Detection & Prevention in Latino Populations

Early detection and prevention are critical to better outcomes in melanoma - but awareness and access can vary across communities. Collin Costello, MD, PhD, of Mayo Clinic, discusses melanoma detection and prevention strategies with a focus on Latino populations.

Session 4: AI in Melanoma Patient Care

Exploring how artificial intelligence is shaping melanoma diagnosis and treatment. Moderated by MRA President & COO Stephanie Kauffman, this panel features Veronica Rotemberg, MD, PhD, of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and patient advocate Keith Tolley discussing the real-world impact of AI on melanoma care.

Session 5: Confidence in Care - Melanoma Patient & Caregiver Navigation Tips

Highlighting practical tools to help patients and caregivers advocate for themselves. Moderated by MRA's Dana Deighton, this session features Megan Schollenberger, CRNP, of Johns Hopkins University, Michael Davies, MD, PhD, of MD Anderson Cancer Center, and caregiver and patient advocate Charlotte Clement de Bona, and sharing practical navigation tips and empowering strategies for melanoma patients and caregivers.

Session 6: The Life of a Melanoma Patient Sample

Learn how patient samples drive research - and why your contribution matters. Moderated by MRA's Chief Science Officer Joan Levy, PhD, this panel highlights MRA's newly launched Melanoma Biorepository and includes insights into how patient samples fuel groundbreaking discoveries from panelists Patricia Possik, PhD, of the Wellcome Sanger Institute and Brazilian National Cancer Institute, and Georgia Beasley, MD, of Duke University.

Session 7: Building a Melanoma Community

A conversation about support, advocacy, and finding strength together. Moderated by MRA's Renee Orcione, this panel features patient advocates Chris Carr, Brandi Corbello, Jim Darwin, and Leah Koskinen sharing powerful perspectives on connection, resilience, and advocacy within the melanoma community.

Access the [full length Forum recording](#) and [event materials](#) like agenda, speaker bios, and presentations! Sign up for MRA's [monthly E-Newsletter](#) to receive updates about future MRA Forums and travel scholarship opportunities.

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