



## **MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE AWARDS \$9.6 MILLION IN RESEARCH GRANTS**

### ***SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATORS AT 26 INSTITUTIONS WORLDWIDE RECEIVE AWARDS TO SPUR BETTER OUTCOMES FOR MELANOMA PATIENTS AMIDST NEW PROGRESS YET GROWING INCIDENCE OF DEADLY SKIN CANCER***

WASHINGTON, DC, April 15, 2013 – The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA), the largest private funder of melanoma research, today announced grant awards exceeding \$9.6 million to 49 scientists at leading academic institutions around the world for investigating new treatments and cures for melanoma. Among the proposals is research to accelerate new therapeutic approaches for dealing with metastatic melanoma, often a fatal disease, including combination therapies, as well as a focus on a greater understanding of melanoma’s initiation.

This latest round of awards brings the total awarded by MRA in its six-year history to almost \$48 million, which have been provided to 169 investigators at 80 institutions in 13 countries. The 2013 grants set new records for funding and projects supported by MRA, which, because of its founders’ generous support of all operating expenses of the foundation, directs 100% all public donations it receives to research. In addition to the \$9.6 million in MRA commitments this year, an additional \$2.12 million in grant support came from industry, corporate organizations, and individuals, bringing the total amount of leveraged funding provided to date to \$42.66 million.

“This year’s grants are at the cutting-edge of the most promising areas of inquiry in the field of melanoma research, including better understanding of genetic factors underlying risk and new treatment approaches to cure or control melanoma once it has spread,” said Wendy K.D. Selig, President and CEO of MRA. “At such an important moment in the long struggle to defeat this disease, we are thrilled to make record-breaking investments in these important studies with the hope of benefiting patients and everyone at risk. In the face of a rising incidence and unacceptable suffering and death from melanoma, our efforts at MRA are focused on accelerating research and building upon recent progress.”

“The awarding today of this latest group of research grants represents another great milestone for MRA,” said Debra Black, MRA Chair. “These grants reflect broad geographic diversity, harnessing talent from all over the world in a host of scientific disciplines. We are gratified about the excitement in the field and the collaborative spirit from a broad cross section of organizations, corporations and individuals who are partnering with MRA in this battle, increasing our ability to meaningfully tackle this disease.”

This round of MRA funding includes five new Academic-Industry Partnership Awards this year, involving participation by Aduro Biotech, Inc., Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., Merck & Co., Inc., and Pfizer, Inc. With these new awards, MRA has now funded a total of eight Academic-Industry Partnerships, providing a novel mechanism for collaboration among academic researchers, industry and the MRA through a match in funding.

The present record-setting slate of grants is made possible through the important contributions of individuals, families and corporate allies made throughout this past year. This year's awards include: four Stewart Rahr-MRA Young Investigators, the Danny Fund-MRA Young Investigator Award, the Duke-MRA Young Investigator Award in Honor of Frank Courtney, the Ellis Family-MRA Young Investigator Award in Memory of Hal Ellis, the GSK-MRA Young Investigator Award, the Helman Family Young Investigator Award, the Suzette and Steven Kolitch-MRA Young Investigator Award, the Christie's-MRA Team Science Award, the L'Oreal Paris-MRA Team Science Award, the Sokoloff Family-MRA Team Science Award, and the Leveraged Finance Fights Melanoma-MRA Academic Industry Partnership Award.

The \$9.6 million slate of awards includes funding for:

- 20 separate project awards
  - 8 Team Science Awards (including 9 designated Young Investigators)
  - 7 Young Investigator Awards
  - 5 Academic-Industry Partnership Awards, (which adds almost \$2 million in leveraged funding)
- 49 Lead Investigators
- 8 countries
- 26 academic institutions

Researchers receiving the awards were associated with the following institutions: Children's Hospital Boston; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Duke University; Johns Hopkins University; La Jolla Institute for Allergy & Immunology; Leeds University; Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich; Massachusetts General Hospital; Melanoma Institute Australia; Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; National Institute of Health and Medical Research, France; Oslo University Hospital; Spanish National Cancer Research Center; Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich; The Wistar Institute; Thomas Jefferson University; University of California, San Francisco; University of Chicago; University of Houston; University of Pennsylvania; University of Pittsburgh; University of South Carolina; University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center; Vanderbilt University; Weill Cornell Medical College; Yale University

For a full description of the grants and awardees, please visit [www.curemelanoma.org](http://www.curemelanoma.org).

### **About the Melanoma Research Alliance**

MRA is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. MRA is poised to build on recent momentum in the field, accelerating the pace of scientific discovery and translation in order to eliminate suffering and death due to melanoma. To date the MRA has awarded almost \$48 million to research projects worldwide.

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