



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE NAMES LOUISE M. PERKINS, Ph.D.,  
AS FIRST FULL-TIME CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER**

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 29, 2013 – The Melanoma Research Alliance (“MRA”), the largest private funder of melanoma research, today announced the appointment of Louise M. Perkins, Ph.D., as Chief Science Officer (CSO).

Dr. Perkins’ appointment marks a milestone in MRA’s evolution, with the establishment of its first full-time CSO position, with responsibility for guiding MRA’s scientific strategy and overseeing the organization’s peer-reviewed grant-making program and scientific collaborations. Since MRA was launched in late 2007, Suzanne L. Topalian, M.D., Professor of Surgery and Oncology, and Director of the Melanoma Program at John Hopkins University’s Sidney Kimmell Comprehensive Cancer Center, has led the organization’s scientific program on a part-time basis. Dr. Topalian, whose research focuses on the promising area of anti-PD-1 therapy for melanoma and other cancers, will continue to advise MRA’s leadership as Chair of its Scientific Advisory Panel and a member of its Grant Review Committee.

Dr. Perkins comes to MRA after having spent five years as CSO at the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation (“MMRF”), and a distinguished industry career that included leadership of oncology research programs at Bayer Pharmaceuticals and Schering-Plough.

“MRA is thrilled to welcome Dr. Perkins as our new full-time CSO, a role perfectly suited to her exceptional experience and accomplishment in the areas of translational research and non-profit scientific expertise,” said Debra Black, MRA co-founder and Board chair. “Dr. Perkins will be leading us forward based upon the extraordinary foundation that has been built under Dr. Topalian’s leadership and with Dr. Topalian’s ongoing engagement. With this stellar team in place, MRA is prepared to maximize the unprecedented opportunity to bring better options and outcomes to melanoma patients and everyone who is at risk.”

“With the incredible progress that is occurring in the field, this is the perfect moment for MRA to be enhancing its reach and impact in the field and among all stakeholders,” said Wendy K.D. Selig, MRA’s president and CEO. “The enormous advances that have been made fuel our commitment to accelerating research toward a time when no one suffers or dies from melanoma. Dr. Perkins’ accomplishments and deep knowledge of cancer biology, drug development, venture philanthropy and innovative approaches to collaboration will propel MRA and the field further toward achieving that goal.”

“MRA and the melanoma community are fortunate to have Dr. Perkins coming into this new full-time role, with her exceptional background and knowledge and interest in translational research,” said Dr. Topalian. “This is an important moment in the extraordinary trajectory that

MRA has followed in a very short period of time since it was launched by the Blacks in 2007. I am delighted to remain closely affiliated with such a unique and impactful organization and I look forward to working with Dr. Perkins and the MRA leadership.”

“MRA has achieved wide recognition for supporting quality research worldwide and its reputation for excellence. This is a unique opportunity to accelerate progress at a time when the scientific possibilities are expanding and there is so much potential for discovery. I am incredibly excited about this challenge and proud to be joining the MRA team,” said Dr. Perkins.

While at the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, Dr. Perkins was responsible for the development and execution of MMRF’s scientific strategy, and also led the continued expansion of its venture philanthropy investments. Under her guidance, MMRF’s Genomics Initiative sequenced the first myeloma tumor genome and comprehensively analyzed 250 myeloma patient samples with an array of genomic technologies, including next-gen sequencing. Prior to her role at MMRF, she was Director of Cancer Research at Bayer Pharmaceuticals, and previously she led a cancer research group at the Schering-Plough Research Institute.

Dr. Perkins holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Biological Chemistry from the University of Michigan, and has conducted postdoctoral studies at Princeton University’s Department of Molecular Biology. She has a B.S. in Zoology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

#### **About MRA**

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 more than \$38 million to research projects worldwide.

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**CONTACT:** Anreder & Company  
212.532.3232  
Steven S. Anreder – [steven.anreder@anreder.com](mailto:steven.anreder@anreder.com)  
Cristina Bacon – [cristina.bacon@anreder.com](mailto:cristina.bacon@anreder.com)