accelerator

BUILDING ON 25 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Established 1998

MULTIPLE MYELOMA Research Foundation | 25th ANNIVERSARY

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Michael Andreini, President and Chief Executive Officer, Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation®

Dear friends,

I am proud to introduce this landmark 25th anniversary issue of Accelerator Magazine. For the past quarter century, our mission—to accelerate a cure for each and every multiple myeloma patient—has been our north star, and our focus has never wavered.

The progress that has been made in the last 25 years is extraordinary. Our work and the work of this community have made a substantial impact on the lives of so many patients. With a commitment to taking calculated risks and driving innovation through collaboration with our partners, we will continue to do great things on behalf of myeloma patients everywhere.

This relentless approach has led to results that have remarkably improved patient outcomes—over $500 million raised for research and more than 15 new therapies approved for myeloma, which have tripled life expectancy for patients. While these milestones are important, what drives this organization daily is the urgency of the fight in front of us.

To answer the most pressing questions in myeloma research and improve patient outcomes, we remain laser focused on advancing the core pillars that guide the MMRF®'s mission. These pillars include our efforts to accelerate the development of novel therapies, drive optimal and more personalized treatment approaches, and empower patients and the entire community with information and resources along their journey with myeloma. Underpinning this work is our commitment to health equity so that all myeloma patients can benefit from the scientific and clinical advances we pursue.

Looking back to where we began 25 years ago, myeloma research has been transformed thanks to the persistence of the entire myeloma community. Yet, there is still much work to be done. Therefore, we remain steadfast in our commitment to pushing the boundaries of scientific exploration and innovation, and we will not take our foot off the accelerator until we've achieved our goal.

> "With a commitment to taking calculated risks and driving innovation through collaboration with our partners, **we will continue to do great things** on behalf of myeloma patients everywhere."

We are so grateful to have you as partners of the MMRF as we work with the greatest urgency to pursue cures for all patients. Now, let us step back and take a few moments to appreciate just how far we have come—together—because tomorrow, the work continues.

Contents

MMRF honored for 21st year with Highest Rating!

25 Years of Accelerating a Cure for Multiple Myeloma

Clockwise from top left: Kathy Giusti (left) and Karen Andrews (right); (L-R) David Siegel, Anne Quinn Young, Mohamad Hussein, Rachid Baz, Asher Chanan-Khan, Keith Stewart, and Paulette Giambalvo; (L-R) George Mulligan, Hearn Jay Cho, Anne Quinn Young, Pam Price, Monique Hartley-Brown, Michael Andreini.

Beginnings

Much has changed since multiple myeloma patient Kathy Giusti and her sister Karen Andrews founded the MMRF in 1998. Twenty-five years ago, myeloma research was underfunded, and a diagnosis was considered a death sentence. Life expectancy was 2-3 years, and the quality of life was poor. There was little awareness, and few treatments were available. From the modest beginning of the MMRF, in Kathy's dining room, the vision to transform myeloma research became a reality. Patient-founded and patient-focused, the MMRF of today is the largest nonprofit in the world solely focused on myeloma and a model for cancer research.

Challenges

From the outset, it was clear that many barriers stood in the way of achieving our mission: to accelerate a cure for each and every myeloma patient. First, we drove critical funding to stimulate research and attract industry attention to myeloma. Next, we mobilized academic medical centers, industry, healthcare providers, and most importantly, patients to create a dedicated community of stakeholders. By fostering investment and collaboration, we helped fuel the breakthroughs in myeloma research that have transformed patient outcomes.

Solutions

To address the lack of access to samples for myeloma research, we created a multi-center tissue bank to speed the pace of scientific discovery, and we built a clinical network—the Multiple Myeloma Research Consortium® (MMRC®)—to drive promising clinical studies.

It would not be possible to develop new therapies without partnering with the biopharma companies that are advancing innovative treatments. Through the Myeloma Investment Fund® (MIF®), our venture philanthropy subsidiary, we continue to invest in promising companies with innovative clinical assets and technologies that could be transformative for myeloma patients.

To drive optimal and more personalized treatments that deliver maximum benefits to every patient, we collected data from a diverse pool and put it into action. The MMRF was the first to sequence the myeloma genome, using samples from the tissue bank we established. This provided the clearest look at myeloma's cell biology. Until that time, only one other cancer had been sequenced. We then launched the CoMMpass^{SM} study, a landmark longitudinal genomic clinical study of more than 1,100 patients designed to provide as much information as possible about myeloma. And we made all of the data available to the research community.

To support patients in their myeloma journey, we provide high-quality education through webinars and expert sessions, as well as one-on-one support for patients and caregivers. We build partnerships with community health networks to increase access to research and improve care for underserved patients. Our Fellows Awards and Research Scholars Program for promising Black investigators improve the diversity of the research community so that those working in myeloma reflect the diversity of our patient community.

The results speak for themselves. Since our inception, the MMRF has raised over $500 million for research, opened nearly 100 clinical trials, and helped bring 15+ FDA-approved therapies to market, which have tripled the life expectancy of myeloma patients.

What is next

Despite all the advances we have made, there is urgent work ahead. Myeloma is still considered incurable, and the majority of patients will eventually relapse despite their current therapy. We are driving the development and delivery of next-generation therapies, leveraging data to identify optimal and more personalized treatment approaches, and empowering myeloma patients and the broader community with information and resources to extend their lives. Central to our mission is our commitment to advancing health equity so that all myeloma patients can benefit from the scientific and clinical advances we pursue. By building on the advances of the last 25 years, we believe we can realize our vision of a world free of myeloma.

Visualizing Our Impact

For 25 years, the MMRF has not only transformed the study of myeloma but also revolutionized the entire field of cancer research by pursuing bold initiatives and innovative strategies.

1998

FIRST
research foundation established; dedicated solely to multiple myeloma

2004

FIRST
multi-center tissue bank and 4k samples to date

2005

FIRST
clinical consortium; 80+ trials

2008

FIRST
full genome sequenced

2011

FIRST
longitudinal registry effort in CoMMpass

2013

CoMMpass^{SM}
becomes largest myeloma dataset in the public domain

2018

FIRST
platform drug trial in MyDRUG^{SM}

2019

FIRST
investment fund in myeloma

2023

$500M+
has been raised for research

> "Looking back to where we began 25 years ago, the field of myeloma research has been transformed thanks to the persistence of the entire myeloma community. Yet, there is still much work to be done."
>
> —**Michael Andreini,** President and Chief Executive Officer, MMRF

Accelerating

the Development of Novel Therapies

Clinical Updates

When the MMRF was founded, there had not been FDA approval for a multiple myeloma treatment in 30 years. That all changed when Velcade and thalidomide showed promise as potential treatments. However, at the time, clinical research efforts were fragmented, so the MMRF created the Multiple Myeloma Research Consortium® (MMRC®), a collaborative network of leading cancer centers in North America, to conduct early-stage clinical trials of novel treatments. The MMRC® has launched nearly 100 trials, enrolled thousands of patients, and has contributed to the FDA approvals of several myeloma treatments including Kyprolis, Pomalyst, Empliciti, Xpovio, and Sarclisa.

MyDRUG℠

One of the current MMRC trials is MYDRUG℠, a groundbreaking clinical trial that uses genomics to test multiple new treatments for patients with high-risk myeloma. It is evaluating treatments that are targeted against specific genomic alterations within the myeloma cells. There are currently three open treatment arms:

- Cotellic® (cobimetinib) – an FDA-approved therapy for melanoma, is designed for patients with the RAS/RAF mutation. Based on early promising findings, the MMRF increased the number of patients in this cohort.
- Balversa® (erdafitinib) – an FDA-approved therapy for bladder cancer, is for patients that have the FGFR3 gene mutation.
- Venclexta® (venetoclax) – an FDA-approved therapy for chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), is intended for patients that have the (11;14) translocation.

HORIZON Clinical Platform Trials

In the first quarter of 2024, we will launch the new HORIZON Clinical Trials program—a clinical research study like MyDRUG℠ that allows multiple novel treatments to be simultaneously tested within a single overarching study design. This approach will speed the evaluation of new therapies and help determine which novel myeloma treatments are the most effective to improve patients' quality and length of life.

The MMRC® has helped achieve significant milestones over the past 25 years:

>4,000	>100	~80
patients enrolled in clinical trials	clinical trials started	agents studied in clinical trials

Craig Tendler, M.D.

Craig Tendler is Vice President, Oncology Clinical Development, Diagnostics, & Global Medical Affairs at Janssen, Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson and Johnson. We recently spoke with Craig about the current state of myeloma research and the milestone anniversary of the MMRF.

How did you get involved with multiple myeloma research? What really brought me to it was at the time I joined J&J in early 2004, we had just announced the licensing deal with Millennium Pharmaceuticals that had rights to Velcade. My team began working very closely with the folks at Millennium and, of course, with the myeloma community. Even in the nascent stages of the MMRF, I could see the benefit of linking two pharma biotech companies together with the myeloma community.

What are you most proud of in your career? Being able to work in a very collaborative way with an organization that has the same set of goals as I do. I value that collaborative spirit around the shared goal of trying to bring a cure and the ability to work with the world's foremost experts in this disease.

What are the most significant breakthroughs you have been part of? For me, it really starts with Velcade. Then, bringing other promising drugs into the portfolio, one of which was Darzalex. One of the interesting aspects about Darzalex is that it also seems to have a very good effect on the bone marrow microenvironment.

What excites you most about the future? The availability of what will become the new regimens, which include immune-based therapies, has the potential to dramatically change the natural history of the disease. I sometimes feel like—even beyond myeloma—that we are in the golden age of cancer drug development and research. Hopefully, a large majority of patients will soon be able to talk about the word "cure." It is almost becoming a reality that might be within reach.

What is driving this transformation? A combination of just a few things. One is a real understanding that there are two components to this disease. There is the myeloma cell and all of its genomic alterations that can be targeted, but there is also, as we say, the soil, where these cells grow and are fed by the bone marrow microenvironment and that also provides a whole host of targets to go after in the treatment of this disease.

What does the 25th anniversary of the MMRF mean to you? The 25th anniversary really is a recognition of their aspirational vision of trying to bring cures to each and every myeloma patient and getting from that aspiration to achieving long-term remissions for the majority of patients.

I consider the MMRF the gold standard for patient advocacy and research in myeloma. That is why I see the future being very bright because the MMRF's model will continue to be a very, very strong force and transform progress toward a cure in a very accelerated fashion.

Myeloma Investment Fund® (MIF®) Updates

The MMRF's venture philanthropy subsidiary, the Myeloma Investment Fund® (MIF®), is the first and only mission-driven venture philanthropy fund focused on myeloma. It identifies and invests in the most promising biotechnology companies with innovative clinical assets and technologies that could be transformative for myeloma patients.

The development of better and more personalized treatments for myeloma largely depends on biotechnology companies. Investments in these companies through the MIF® provide the financial and strategic support to drive a stable, sustainable pipeline for the development of new therapies. The MIF® also works closely with its portfolio companies to help them advance their myeloma programs and improve their probability of success.

New Investments

NECTINTx

Nectin Therapeutics is a biotechnology company that develops next-generation immunotherapies. Its differentiated therapies have the potential to achieve new standards for efficacy and patient response across a number of cancers. The MIF®'s investment is supporting the evaluation of Nectin's lead drug candidate, NTX1088, as a potential treatment for myeloma.

Recent Investments

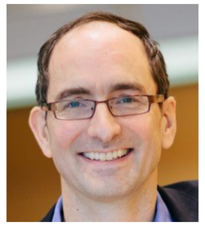
Telo Therapeutics is an early-stage company with compounds in preclinical development. Its lead compound is in the same class as selinexor, an FDA-approved treatment for relapsed and refractory myeloma. Telo is working to reduce side effects associated with this class of drugs so that more patients can benefit.

KAHR is a clinical-stage biotech company exploring the potential of its lead immunotherapy drug for the treatment of myeloma. This candidate is a novel, bi-specific checkpoint inhibitor that aims to activate innate and adaptive immunity to treat solid tumors and blood cancers.

Luminary Therapeutics is an early clinical-stage cell therapeutics company poised to begin clinical trials with the company's BAFF CAR-T cell therapy. It is the first CAR-T therapy that targets three distinct antigens present on myeloma tumors.

MIF®'S IMPACT (Since 2019)

$17M	**12**	**4**
Raised	Companies in Portfolio	Treatments Advanced to the Clinic



Mark Frohlich

Indapta Therapeutics is a privately held biotechnology company that develops and commercializes a natural killer (NK) cell therapy platform for treating blood and solid tumor cancers. Indapta is working to bring this off-the-shelf cellular therapy to cancer patients to address the limitations of currently available immunotherapies.

What brought you to Indapta? I have been involved in immunotherapy, specifically, cell therapy for cancer for my entire career. The natural killer space was a growing area, and Indapta would allow me to address some of the challenges of autologous cell therapies, the goal of which is to restore the body's ability to make normal blood cells after high-dose chemotherapy or radiation.

What intrigues you about these therapies? It appeared that the allogeneic process—taking cells from a donor and giving them to another patient—was very safe—you did not see any of the toxicities we were seeing with the autologous CAR T-cell therapies. I became convinced that this could be more cost effective and democratize access because it could potentially be given in the outpatient setting.

Is this the future of cancer treatment? Since I trained, the treatment of cancer has really been transformed. The part that really excites me has been harnessing the immune system. When I began, the treatment of cancer was mixing and matching a variety of very toxic chemotherapies, maybe combined with radiation therapy. Now, immunotherapy is the standard of care of many if not most cancers.

What has led to this transformation? Back when the first human genome was sequenced, it cost millions of dollars and took years. Now you can get the results in a couple of weeks for a couple thousand dollars, so the use of cells to treat cancer has been transformational.

You are set to begin a Phase I trial of your natural kill (NK) cell therapy for patients with relapsed/refractory myeloma or lymphoma. Can you tell us a little bit more about that? We are very excited that we gained investigational new drug (IND) clearance from the FDA to commence a first-in-human Phase 1 trial of IDP-023, an allogeneic NK cell therapy, in patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma and lymphoma. This is a major milestone achievement for our team, which successfully demonstrated the reproducibility of our manufacturing process and designed a robust clinical trial. G-NK cells have demonstrated highly potent antibody-dependent cytotoxicity in combination with monoclonal antibodies in preclinical models, and we are excited to evaluate the safety and clinical activity of G-NK cells.

What is Indapta doing to ensure these therapies can get to as many patients as possible? We hope to create a therapy that is safe and can be administered in the outpatient setting for a much lower cost. If you have a therapy you can take off the shelf, you do not have to wait for it to get manufactured. Patients who are too sick to wait can get it. The side effect profile is so much more favorable, so many more patients can potentially be helped.

Can you describe your collaboration with the MIF®? The MMRF and MIF® have deep connections, and a long understanding of the disease, so having them point us to other companies that do high quality—both basic and translational—clinical research that we could potentially collaborate with is an incredibly useful asset.

What excites you most about the future of myeloma treatment? I believe that NK cells will be a part of the new golden age of cancer treatment, in terms of being safe, effective, and administered in the outpatient setting to benefit more patients.

Accelerating new therapies for each and every myeloma patient

> "
> The drug that I was taking this spring stopped working, so I called the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, and they pointed me to this latest study. It's a bispecific antibody, and it's going to use my own immune system to fight the cancer.
>
> GAIL, LIVING WITH MYELOMA SINCE 2019

Your support makes this critical work possible. Donate today.

MULTIPLE MYELOMA
Research Foundation

Driving

Optimal and More Personalized Treatment Approaches

Overview of **Data Initiatives**

Advancing research through data

Patient data is the engine that powers clinical research. It is especially important in a disease like multiple myeloma, due to its heterogeneous nature —meaning every patient's myeloma has specific features and acts differently. For example, patients experience many different symptoms and vary in their response to treatment. Therefore, collecting and sharing data from a diverse array of patients is vital to identifying optimal and more personalized treatments.

The MMRF Virtual Lab™

We have invested in a data architecture, analytics, and a sharing platform to increase collaboration and accelerate scientific advancements. Through our new MMRF Virtual Lab^{TM} (VLab), all the data we generate will ultimately be stored and shared with other researchers. By co-locating our data and making it accessible to the broader research community, we can fuel more breakthroughs and improve patient lives faster. Two of the most important data sets in VLab will be the CoMMpass Study and Immune Atlas, which was made possible by the samples collected through CoMMpass.

CoMMpass^{SM} Study

Over the past 25 years, the MMRF has been an invaluable generator of data for the research community. Our CoMMpass^{SM} Study is a decade-long longitudinal genomic clinical study of more than 1,100 patients. Launched in 2011, CoMMpass^{SM} focuses on mapping the genomic landscape of myeloma and is one of the largest myeloma datasets in the public domain.

Immune Atlas

The immune system plays a critical role determining a patient's prognosis and response to treatment. We are creating an immune-focused database, called Immune Atlas, incorporating the existing genomic and clinical data from the CoMMpass Study to develop a more comprehensive picture of myeloma disease biology. It will advance our understanding of how a myeloma patient's immune system changes during the development of their disease and how it is affected by therapy. The insights generated through Immune Atlas will help guide optimized treatment approaches for myeloma patients in the future.

> "CoMMpass is the **single most important contribution** to myeloma research. By integrating genomics, epigenomics, and immune phenotyping with clinical outcomes, it will be the guide to the cure of multiple myeloma."
>
> —**David Siegel, MD, PhD,** Division Chief at the Myeloma John Theurer Cancer Center

Investing Nearly **$23M** to Accelerate a Cure

TRANSLATIONAL GRANTS

The MMRF continues its support of multicenter translational research projects through our **Myeloma Accelerator Challenge Program Grants.** We are investing $21 million over the next three years in translational research focused on patients with the highest unmet needs, including high-risk newly diagnosed multiple myeloma and high-risk smoldering myeloma.

2023 Myeloma Accelerator Challenge (MAC) Grant Recipients

Samir Parekh, MD

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY

Transforming Treatment of High-Risk Myeloma

Collaborating institutions:

Albert Einstein Medical College

Hackensack University Medical Center

Stanford University Medical Center

University of California San Francisco

Washington University of St. Louis

Sagar Lonial, MD

Emory Winship Cancer Center, Atlanta, GA

Clinical & Multi-Omics Platforms to Define HR SMM

Collaborating institutions:

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Massachusetts General Hospital

Mayo Clinic

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Institute

Pieter Sonneveld, MD, PhD

Erasmus University Medical Center, Rotterdam, Netherlands

A Systems Biology Approach to High-Risk Multiple Myeloma

Collaborating institutions:

Amsterdam University Medical Centers

Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg

University of Turin

University of Salamanca

MMRF RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

We are committed to supporting efforts toward improving diversity and inclusion in the research and clinical fields to drive health equity for all patient groups with myeloma. The **MMRF Scholars Program** provides financial support for Black researchers and clinicians (MD and/or PhD) who are currently active or interested in pursuing a career in the field of myeloma. Awardees are provided up to $100,000 per year for four years to support their career development as researchers from post-doctoral to first tenure-track positions.

We are incredibly thankful to The Mentoring Committee that is responsible for the oversight of the Scholars Program and mentoring of scholars during their tenure.

The MMRF is proud to name the following recipients of the inaugural MMRF Scholars Awards:

Inaugural MMRF Scholars Award Recipients

Dr. Joselle Cook, MBBS

Mayo Clinic

Prevalence of MGUS Among Unique Populations of Black People

Eden Biltibo, MD, MS

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Identifying Effective and Cost-Conscious Maintenance Daratumumab Dosing

MMRF FELLOWS AWARD PROGRAM

The **MMRF Fellows Award Program** is an initiative supporting young researchers at the post-doctorate, medical fellow, or junior faculty levels working under the supervision or guidance of a research mentor in myeloma. We have supported these awards since our inception, creating a steady pipeline of new researchers to the field. The MMRF provides $150,000 in research funding over two years to successful applicants.

2022 Fellows Award Program Recipients

Luz Moreno-Rueda, PhD

MD Anderson Cancer Center

Development of LAMP5 as a Prognostic Biomarker in Multiple Myeloma

Santiago Thibaud, MD

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Screening for Pathogenic Germline Variants in Multiple Myeloma

Orlando (Bonell) Patino-Escobar, MD

UC San Francisco

Multiple Myeloma Cell Surface Antigens in NK Cell Inhibition and Exhaustion

Dimitra Karagkouni, PhD

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Characterizing the T Cell Receptor-Antigen Dynamics in Multiple Myeloma

Empowering

the Myeloma Community

Patient Education

For patients to achieve their best possible outcomes, they need to be their own best advocates. That is why we provide patients with information and resources to achieve that goal. We offer an array of educational programs, which includes informational webinars and podcasts with leading experts, clinical summits, and patient education toolkits. These resources have reached more than 16,000 patients in the past year alone. "One of the things that we really stress to patients is that you have to be a health care consumer. There are new therapies that are coming out all the time," says Mary DeRome, MS, Senior Director of Medical Communications and Education at the MMRF.

Right Track

We help facilitate self-advocacy through our partnership with the Harvard Business School Kraft Precision Medicine Accelerator and other leading cancer research and advocacy organizations. Together, we developed the Right Track to help myeloma patients optimize their decision making at every step after their diagnosis.

Additionally, the MMRF has developed a best-in-class myeloma education resource hub that is available to the entire community. Our Patient Navigation Center and Myeloma Mentors program provide one-on-one patient support options to optimize outcomes.

Our **Patient Navigation Center** enables myeloma patients and caregivers to connect with patient navigators via phone, email, or an online form for guidance and support throughout their journey.

There are times when patients have questions that only another patient or caregiver can answer. Our **MMRF Myeloma Mentors®** program connects patients and caregivers with trained mentors who share personal insights to inform, empower, and support them.

RIGHT TRACK

Your path to precision resources and treatment

RIGHT TEAM
Access experts and centers that have extensive experience treating your specific type of cancer

RIGHT TESTS
Get the information, tests, and precise diagnosis to make the right treatment decisions.

RIGHT TREATMENT
Work with your team to decide on the best treatment plan and/or to identify clinical trials.

Share at every step: You can help yourself while helping others.

Andrew Gordon

The MMRF Myeloma Mentors® program offers patients and caregivers the opportunity to connect one-on-one with trained mentors who can share personal insights to inform, empower, and support fellow patients and caregivers. We recently spoke with Andrew Gordon, one of the MMRF's Myeloma Mentors®, about his journey with multiple myeloma and how he continues to help other patients navigate this disease.

Tell us a little about yourself. My name is Andrew Gordon. I am 70 years old, soon to be 71. I was an attorney for 40 plus years. I semi-retired in 2015.

Describe your myeloma diagnosis. I was picking something up and I got a tremendous pain in my back. A chiropractor said I had a fractured rib. I searched the web for spontaneous rib fractures, and everything that came up seemed pretty serious. I went to my family doctor the next day and asked him to run bloodwork. He ended up telling me I needed to go to the emergency room because I was anemic. Fortunately, I went to Hershey Medical Center where they started giving me transfusions.

The doctor came the next morning, and he said he was 80 to 90% sure you have multiple myeloma. When he told me that, I got a true sense of relief. He told me it was incurable, but it was a relief because I knew something was seriously wrong, and now we had put a name to it.

What were your first thoughts? I have this disease, but I am not going to cry about it. And I knew nothing about it. So, I am going to do research. I am going to make a plan and stick to it. I am going to be open about it. I am going to be mentally tough and deal with it. That was my approach to it.

How do you start mentoring? Before the Mentor Program existed, we had nobody to talk to, no way to connect with other myeloma patients. Support groups were few and far between. You had to educate yourself. When I was diagnosed, there was a website called Myeloma Beacon that had forums for patients. For about two and a half years, I wrote a patient column on that website. I wanted to help others and educate them on what I went through and what I had learned since I got diagnosed. I believe strongly in this, and I was doing everything I could to mentor people.

What do you tell newly diagnosed patients? It affects different people differently. The treatments work on different people differently, so you have to make sure that your doctor knows everything that you are feeling, what you are going through, and what your goals are. And the only way to do that is you have to educate yourself. So, I urge them to go to some very trusted websites. The MMRF is a good example.

What can you tell us about the MMRF Myeloma Mentor Program? One of the first people who was considering developing the MMRF Mentor Program was a woman named Randi Schwartz. She believed very strongly in the Mentor program and jumpstarted the program by making a contribution to get it off the ground. I talked to her and said, "You have no idea how strongly I believe in this ... if this program gets started, I want to be part of this." And I was in the first group of mentors.

What are the benefits of the Myeloma Mentor program? On a personal level, there is not a single mentee contact that I have where I do not learn something. I am always learning. I will answer patient questions about transplants or anything else, and when we are done, they are like, "Oh my God, I know so much more now than I knew when we started this call." And that makes me feel really good. I am just so grateful.

Ola Banjo, Senior Director, Community Engagement & Partnerships

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Our commitment to serving the entire myeloma community is stronger than ever. The reality is that disparities in health care access and inferior outcomes are especially significant in the Black community, which makes up 20% of myeloma patients. To support historically underserved patients, our initiatives focus on driving greater inclusivity and representation in research studies, addressing disparities that affect patient outcomes and access to quality care through awareness and education, and building a partner network and research community that reflects the diverse patient population that we serve. We are committed to ensuring that every patient, no matter who they are, has equitable access to high-quality resources and opportunities to optimize their outcomes.

We spoke with Ola Banjo, PharmD, Senior Director, Community Engagement & Partnerships, a new role at the MMRF, about the importance of these programs.

What is your role at the MMRF? I am developing and implementing programs to build trust, broaden reach, and inspire engagement to improve outcomes for all patients, with a focus on those who have been traditionally underserved.

What sort of challenges are you facing? Patients are not aware of the resources that we have. We want to get ahead of that and position ourselves in a way so that we are not just reaching a subset of patients, but really meeting the greater myeloma community.

What resources and approaches are you employing? We partner with trusted organizations within the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community. We provide educational resources via educational sessions, both in person and virtually. And we are focused on making clinical trials and studies more accessible through partnerships such as The Lazarex Cancer Foundation.

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: THE LAZAREX CANCER FOUNDATION

This partnership is part of a plan the MMRF developed to improve diversity and representation in myeloma clinical trials. The Lazarex Cancer Foundation strives to improve cancer health outcomes; FDA cancer clinical trial diversity, retention, and enrollment; and patient access to care. As part of our partnership, we are offering myeloma patients financial assistance to cover costs such as transportation and housing while participating in myeloma studies.

DONOR PROFILE

Craig Chase

Donors are vital partners of the MMRF. Their generosity is invaluable in helping us pursue novel therapies and advances toward a cure for each and every patient.

In 2017, Craig Chase, a long-time donor and MMRF advocate, embarked on an unconventional, but ultimately successful, treatment path. Here, Craig shares with us the story of his unique journey.

I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2014. I was on a flight on the way home from a business trip. My cell phone rang, and it was my family doctor. I had gone through some blood tests at his office because I was having problems shaking a scratchy voice and a little fatigue. He said, "Craig, are you sitting down? I am pretty sure you have cancer." We went to the emergency room out near where we live, and they confirmed the diagnosis of myeloma.

I immediately started to focus on the road ahead. What happens next? I jumped on the internet and start doing research. The goal was to get my numbers in a place where I could have a stem cell transplant. The first set of medications really did not do the job. Then I had to go into the hospital for old school chemo, and that did not work at all. Then I was able to get a stem cell transplant in June of 2015. My very good partial response lasted for less than eight months.

It was in June of 2017 that Legend Biotech made a presentation about a drug they were testing in clinical trials with 32 patients and having a response rate over 90% at a hospital in China. That drug would later become known as Carvykti. I discussed it with my doctor at UCSF. He told me that you really cannot trust stage 1 data out of China. But I said, "What do I have to lose? I mean, there is nothing going on for me here."

I started a dialog with the Chief Technical Officer and Chief Strategy Officer from Legend, who had gotten his degree at Stanford. We had conversations surrounding the data, and in mid-June of 2017, they said that they would take me. We were over there for two months in a hospital in China. And it was a great experience. The people were terrific.

Later, a friend reached out and said that I should really contact the MMRF. They might have some other ideas and can help to make sure that you are getting the best care that you possibly can. I was getting information and talking to a nurse here, but I was not giving anything back. But it made sense that all these treatments and these experiences needed to be put to use, to help other people who were in similar situations or even dissimilar situations.

The tendency when you are sick is to make your world smaller. But do not make it too small because the people in your life will help hold you up. There is no reason, if you are diagnosed today, to be glum about it in a way that will negatively affect your life. There are so many great medical options that you can pursue that will keep you going. That is a great place to be.

Moving Mountains
for Multiple Myeloma®

2023 Alaska Trek

As part of the Moving Mountains for Multiple Myeloma® (MM4MM®) program, a team of 11 intrepid individuals took an epic journey hiking through the mountainous region outside of Anchorage, AK, from July 23 through July 29. Their efforts were in support of the more than 35,000 patients diagnosed with myeloma annually in the United States, and they have raised $83,900 to date for myeloma research. Donations can continue to be made through end of the calendar year.

The expedition included an extraordinary group of myeloma patients, caregivers, friends and family members, nurses, and team members from the organizing partners. For Jen Asnier, who was diagnosed with myeloma around her 31st birthday, this was her 4th MM4MM fundraising trek. "I am one of the lucky ones. I am still here. I try to embrace life each day, and this challenge for the MMRF has me incredibly excited," she said.

All funds raised throughout the weeklong journey go directly to the MMRF, the largest nonprofit in the world solely focused on accelerating a cure for each and every myeloma patient. "We are thrilled to have this group of patients, family members, healthcare professionals, and our sponsor GSK supporting this effort," said Michael Andreini, President and CEO of the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation. "This MM4MM team represents a microcosm of our community and demonstrates that together we can move mountains in our pursuit of a cure for each and every multiple myeloma patient."

The MM4MM Alaska trek is a Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation® (MMRF®) initiative sponsored by GSK. Since MM4MM began with its first trek in 2016, the program has raised over $3 million for myeloma research.

MM4MM Alaska trek participant **Elizabeth Bohannon** (pictured left, with her longtime friend Inga Aksamit) is a former oncology nurse, employment lawyer, and an executive coach and leadership consultant. In 2021, she was diagnosed with myeloma and has been on maintenance therapy since September 2022. As a former oncology nurse, Elizabeth knew a great deal about myeloma upon her diagnosis. Even so, as she described it, "Time stood still." Today, however, Elizabeth is "feeling good, strong even," and is doing her very best to live life to the fullest.

SAVE THE DATE

2023 Fall Patient Education Events

OCTOBER		
October 1	IMS Conference Daily Highlights	Virtual
October 5	Relapsed/Refractory Podcast Episode	Virtual
October 11	Non-BCMA Targeted Therapy Webinar	Virtual
October 21	Virtual Patient Summit with Rocky Mountain Cancer Center	Virtual
NOVEMBER		
November 11	Hybrid Patient Summit in Collaboration with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute	Boston, MA
November 9-11	JADPRO Fireside Chat with MMRF PNC Nurses	Virtual
DECEMBER		
December 9-12	American Society of Hematology Daily Meeting Highlights	Virtual

2023 Fall Calendar of Events

ENDURANCE EVENTS		
September 24	Berlin Marathon	Berlin, Germany
October 8	Chicago Marathon	Chicago, IL
November 5	NYC Marathon	NYC
MMRF WALK/RUN EVENTS		
October 7	Hudson River Park	NYC
October 21	Fairmount Park	Philadelphia
November 4	Griffith Park	Los Angeles
November 18	Scottsdale Stadium	Scottsdale

Events are subject to change; for more information visit: **TheMMRF.org/Events**

Myeloma fundraising, your way.

This is Reed.

He's 13. With the help of the MMRF Create Your Own fundraiser program, he organized a ping-pong tournament in memory of his uncle Brad, who battled myeloma. Reed ended up raising over $3,000 for the cause. You too can make a difference by turning your passion into purpose. Whether it's a special event or your own independent fundraiser, the possibilities are endless.

MMRF CREATE YOUR OWN FUNDRAISER PROGRAM.

Contact Daniel Guerriero,
Manager, Peer-to-Peer Fundraising (DIY)
guerrierod@themmrf.org to find out more.

MMRF TEAM FOR CURES

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Myeloma

CURE's myeloma page is a go-to resource for oncology news and updates in the world of myeloma Here, readers will find cancer articles, videos, podcasts, and more with expert insight into the latest treatments and research in myeloma.

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Latest News

Exercise Can Strengthen the Immune Systems in Patients with Myeloma
By Rylan DeStefano
June 28th 2023
Supervised exercise can help to improve the immune system for patients with myeloma, recent research showed.

Maintenance Darzalex Regimen Promising in Post-Transplant Myeloma
By Kristie L. Kahl
June 10th 2023

Elranatamab Elicits Early, Deep Responses in Relapsed/Refractory Myeloma
By Chris Ryan
June 4th 2023

Frozen Stem Cell Grafts Linked to Higher Relapse Rates in Blood Cancer
By Brielle Benyon
May 18th 2023

Marking Off My Cancer Milestones
By Ronald Chin
May 3rd 2023

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CURE's myeloma page is a go-to resource for oncology news and updates in the world of myeloma. We understand that a cancer diagnosis can instantly transform your life, making you an educated patient overnight, actively involved in your care decisions.

Here, you'll find a wealth of cancer articles, videos, podcasts, and more, all curated by experts to keep you up-to-date with the latest treatments and research in myeloma.

Explore our comprehensive multiple myeloma section, designed to empower patients and caregivers with valuable insights, including:

- An in-depth understanding of the cancer type
- Information on potential diagnoses
- Accessible explanations of available treatments
- Support and guidance for living with cancer

Learn more and share with others.

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Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation

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Looking for guidance?

We are here to help. The professionals at our Patient Navigation Center can offer insights, counseling, and support throughout your treatment journey.

Give us a call, Mon.–Fri., 9am–7pm ET
888-841-MMRF (6673)

or email us at PatientNavigator@TheMMRF.org

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