

February 28, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Collins and Cole, Vice Chair Murray and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the thousands of melanoma patients, researchers, providers, survivors, and their families, **we write to urge you to protect and prioritize funding for melanoma research and prevention during your final negotiations for the Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations package.**

We respectfully urge you to ensure continuation of \$40 million in Defense-appropriated funding for the Melanoma Research Program (MRP) within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). This amount, which has been flat funded since FY22, will help ensure continued progress in melanoma cancer research and prevention. We also urge an increase in funding to \$6 million for the Skin Cancer Prevention Activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as \$7.38 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the US, and over 8,430 Americans are expected to die from the deadliest form of skin cancer, melanoma, in 2025.<sup>1</sup> This is a disease that routinely disfigures, kills, and financially exhausts people all over the country. Adequately funding research institutions such as NCI and CDMRP will help advance new breakthroughs and cures not just for melanoma, but for many other cancers, as melanoma research has been known to have a “multiplier effect” leading to breakthroughs in the treatment of other cancers. Additionally, investments into our research community help spur economic growth and contribute to strong regional economies.

NCI-supported research has had a profound impact on the understanding and management of and ability to survive metastatic melanoma. Recently, NCI-sponsored grants have worked to better harness the body’s immune system to attack cancer cells, determine a better sequence of treatment regimens to prevent metastasis, and find effective treatments for rare melanomas. This world-class institution has benefited Americans from every congressional district nationwide and is one of the country’s greatest assets in combatting debilitating health challenges that affect patients, families, and communities both rural and urban alike.

Likewise, in the short amount of time it has received dedicated funding from Congress, the MRP has shown promise and helped to fill a critical gap in melanoma funding. For example, one of

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<sup>1</sup> *Melanoma of the skin*. American Cancer Society. (2025). <https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/types/melanoma-of-the-skin>

the FY19 Concept Award recipients, Dr. Sharad Singhal, found that RLIP inhibition can **prevent** melanoma formation which could be further developed into much needed therapeutic prevention agents. Dr. Singhal's treatment of melanoma tumors with RLIP also paves the way for a potentially novel treatment option for patients with metastatic melanoma who do not respond to immunotherapy. The MRP has already led to a deeper understanding of this disease, and we remain optimistic about the developments yet to come.

While research is critical, so is funding for cancer prevention, screening and early detection, which saves lives and money. The CDC's Skin Cancer Prevention Program plays an indispensable role in the prevention, detection and treatment of skin cancer, including melanoma. Approximately 90% of melanoma cases can be prevented and the substantial cost of the treatment of advanced disease could be reduced through the use of existing evidence-based prevention and early detection strategies, many of which are supported by the CDC's Skin Cancer Prevention Program.<sup>2</sup>

The past decade has seen enormous gains for melanoma treatment and has ushered in a new generation of survivors. We urge you to take a bipartisan approach to completing FY 2025 appropriations in a timely manner and with robust investment in the MRP, NCI and CDC's Skin Cancer Prevention Program so that more people survive this brutal disease.

Sincerely,

Melanoma Research Foundation	Meghan Mooradian, MD	John M. Kirkwood, MD
Park Dermatology	Lilit Karapetyan, MD, MS, FACP	Kasey L. Coutts, PhD
Society for Pediatric Dermatology	Ravi Amaravadi, MD	Richard D. Carvajal, MD
The Skin Cancer Foundation	John M. Kirkwood, MD	John Lamar, PhD
IMPACT Melanoma	Diana Saleiro, PhD	Anne Marie Lane, MPH
Connect Melanoma	Ryan Sullivan, MD	Walter J Storkus, PhD
AIM at Melanoma Foundation	Richard D. Carvajal, MD	Juan A. Recio, PhD
Jason Farley All In For A Cure Foundation Inc.	J. Villanueva, PhD	Elizabeth Buchbinder, MD
Colette Coyne Memorial Melanoma Foundation	Kristen Richards, MD	Arkadiusz Z. Dudek, MD, PhD
Dermatology Nurses' Association	Shaheer Khan, DO	
Sun Safety for Kids	Diwakar Davar, MD	
Prevent Cancer Foundation	Jesse Riordan, PhD	
Society of Dermatology Physician Associates	Richard Wu, MD, PhD	
Society of Behavioral Medicine	Rizwan Haq, MD, PhD	
James W. Smithy, MD, MHS	Zhi Sheng, PhD	
Shuai Li, MD, PhD, FAHA	Steven Fiering, PhD	
Rolando Perez-Lorenzo, PhD	Jose Lutzky, MD	
	Katharine Canfield	
	Ruth Halaban, PhD	
	Poulikos I. Poulikakos, PhD	

<sup>2</sup> <https://melanoma.org/melanoma-education/prevention/#:~:text=Approximately%2090%25%20of%20melanomas%20are%20considered%20preventable.>

