



Pulse



Conquering the Unknowns in Lymphoma

Thomas Habermann, MD,
Professor of Medicine at Mayo

Pulse

A Publication for Friends of the Lymphoma Research Foundation



Pulse is a publication of the Lymphoma Research Foundation, providing the latest updates on the Foundation and its focus on lymphoma research, awareness, and education.

The Lymphoma Research Foundation is devoted to funding innovative lymphoma research and serving the lymphoma community through a comprehensive series of education programs, outreach initiatives, and patient services.

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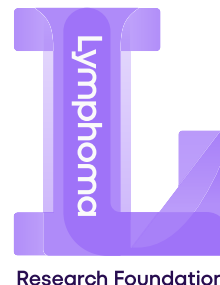
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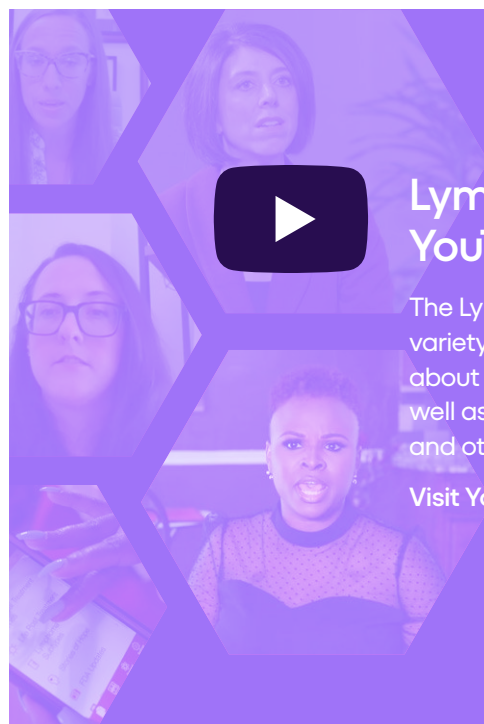
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Lymphoma Research Foundation's YouTube Channel

The Lymphoma Research Foundation's YouTube channel offers a wide variety of educational videos to help the lymphoma community learn about lymphoma. These videos provide disease-specific information as well as education regarding diagnosis, treatment options, clinical trials, and other resources for people dealing with a lymphoma diagnosis.

Visit [YouTube.com/c/LymphomaResearch](https://www.youtube.com/c/LymphomaResearch) to watch and subscribe.

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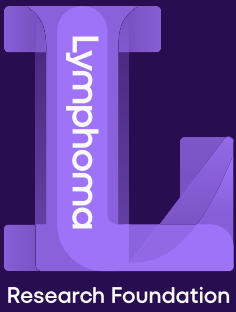
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New Brand. Same Mission.

The Lymphoma Research Foundation's brand evolution modernizes and differentiates the Foundation's look and defines our place at the center of the lymphoma community.

Though our colors and our appearance may have changed, our lifesaving mission remains the same: to realize the promise of science, to eradicate lymphoma, and serve the community touched by this disease.

**Grounded in Research.
Committed to Community.**

From the CEO



At the Lymphoma Research Foundation, our sights have always been fixed to the horizon, looking ahead toward our vision of a world without lymphoma. Our focus on the future is why we have funded over \$80M in lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) research to date and why we remain dedicated to fostering early-career scientists who are committed to understanding and curing this disease.

You'll learn more about this newest generation of lymphoma researchers as we introduce you to our 2024 Clinical Investigator Career Development Award (CDA), Postdoctoral Fellowship, and Follicular Lymphoma Priority Research Grant grantees in this issue of *Pulse*. With the support of the Foundation, these talented scientific minds will work to discover new treatments, improve patient care, and break through barriers in blood cancer research. We are excited to see the ways in which their innovations will reshape the field of lymphoma research.

This issue also profiles Dr. Thomas Habermann, who served as the first Chair of the Mayo Clinic's Lymphoma Group and is a current member and Past Chair of the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). Over the course of his storied career, Dr. Habermann has pioneered advancements in clinical research and witnessed the impact that the Foundation has had on the field. Now, he's committed to supporting and mentoring the next generation of lymphoma researchers as they make breakthroughs of their own.

Finally, this issue spotlights those who are committed to using their time and talents to uplift our community of patients, survivors, and care partners. You will have the opportunity to meet some of the Foundation's most passionate supporters who were recognized in March of this year at our 2024 Fundraise Your Way Awards. You'll also be introduced to Timmy Ward, a Rutgers senior whose first season of college football was marked by a shocking diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma. Refusing to let cancer keep him from his Big Ten dreams, Timmy is dedicated to helping others facing lymphoma now that he is disease free and back on the field.

The future of lymphoma research and the work that we do in service of patients would not be possible without our community's steadfast support. Your unfaltering commitment and your dedication to the Foundation's mission, along with the expert guidance of our SAB and the trailblazing efforts of our researchers, brings us closer and closer to a cure each day.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meghan Gutierrez'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Meghan Gutierrez
Chief Executive Officer

Philanthropy in Action



2024 South Florida Gold Invitational Raises Over \$330,000

Lymphoma Research Foundation donors and supporters teed off at La Gorce Country Club in Miami Beach, Florida, on Monday, April 15 for the inaugural 2024 South Florida Golf Invitational. Golfers took a swing at curing blood cancer as they tested their skills at one of the most exclusive private golf clubs in the country, designed by golfing great Jack Nicklaus. Over \$330,000 was raised in support of the Foundation's mission at the event, which also featured a cocktail and awards reception following the morning's golf tournament. The event was chaired by Leigh Olson, Secretary of the Foundation's Board of Directors, and Foundation Scientific Advisory Board member Dr. John Leonard. The event also featured remarks from Foundation Ambassador Chris Gorelik.



2024 TD Five Boro Bike Tour Raises Nearly \$6,000

Each year, thousands of cyclists take to the streets of New York City for the TD Five Boro Bike Tour – including members of the Lymphoma Research Foundation community. This year's event, held on Sunday, May 5, saw cyclists riding 40 miles through all five of NYC's boroughs, with 6 riders representing the Foundation. They raised nearly \$6,000 to support cutting-edge research and one-of-a-kind patient and professional education programs.



2024 Dallas Lymphoma Walk Raises Over \$46,000

On Sunday, March 3, members of the lymphoma community gathered in Dallas, Texas, to get us one step closer to a world without lymphoma at the 2024 Dallas Lymphoma Walk. Walkers and supporters attended the walk, raising over \$46,000 to power lifesaving research and support the lymphoma community. This year's event also featured an exciting color run.

Fundraise Your Way

The Lymphoma Research Foundation's **Fundraise Your Way** program allows you to turn your interests and talents into unique fundraising events that support the Foundation's mission. Use your passion to raise funds for lymphoma research through an in-person or virtual event, special occasion, athletic competition, race or challenge, or whatever you have in mind. There's no limit to how you can fundraise and make an impact on the lymphoma community.

Visit lymphoma.org/fundraiseyourway to get started today!





2024 Fundraise Your Way Awards Recap

Each year, volunteers across the country turn their talents and interests into unique fundraising events through the Lymphoma Research Foundation's Fundraise Your Way program. From bake sales to bike rides, supporters are helping the Foundation work toward improved treatments and cures for lymphoma.

On March 21, 2024, Foundation staff and supporters joined together to celebrate its dedicated Fundraise Your Way volunteers during the second annual Fundraise Your Way Awards. Fundraisers were honored in categories including Rookie of the Year, Most Innovative Fundraiser, Ride Team of the Year, Walk Team of the Year, and Endurance Athlete of the Year.

Congratulations and thank you to all of our 2024 nominees and winners!

Rookie of the Year

This award is presented to an inaugural fundraiser that has made a significant impact in support of the Foundation's mission to eradicate lymphoma and serve those touched by this disease.



Winner:
Lehigh Delta Chi
and Justin Schuster
*Volleyball for
Lymphoma*

Nominees:
Carly Stafford
*Great Smoky
Mountains
Half Marathon*
Figueroa Mountain
Brewing Co.
*Lymphoma Research
Foundation Partnership*

Most Innovative Fundraiser

From backyard parties to ugly sweater sales, there's a way to turn fun into fundraising. Here's to celebrating thinking outside of the box.



Winner:
Lewis Kweit
*Birdies for Blood
Cancer Awareness*

Nominees:
Gigi Hatcher
*Let's Beat
Lymphoma*
Roy Ryan & Deb
Perkins
*Danny "Buck" Kane
Memorial Golf
Outing*

Ride Team of the Year

This award honors extraordinary fundraising efforts that support the annual Lymphoma Research Ride. Each hill pedaled brings us closer to treatments and cures.



Winner:
Gabriella Tornatore
Tribe Cycle Ride

Nominees:
Joe and Cathy
Pasanello
*Volunteers
Extraordinaire*
Sondra Shemer
Lymphomaniacs

Walk Team of the Year

This award celebrates outstanding and creative fundraising for one of the Foundation's Lymphoma Walks. (Chicago, New York, and Minneapolis)



Winner:
Rachel Grybas
Ryan & Sandy's Angels

Nominees:
Eileen Reali
*Mayo Clinic
Lymphomies*
Anthony Corrado
Toeknees LymphOMIES

Endurance Athlete of the Year

From first-time marathoners to IRONMAN champions, the Foundation is proud to have teams compete in endurance events worldwide, including the Los Angeles Marathon, the New York Marathon, and the IRONMAN World Championships.



Winners:
John Cirolia
Michael Ferrara
Richard Johnson
*Los Angeles &
New York Marathons*

Chuck Papanos Legacy Award

This special honor is given annually to an individual who embodies Chuck's mantra: "Doing Nothing is Not an Option."



Honoree:
Tim Corbett
*#CorbettGremmStrong
& Tablestock*

Fundraiser of the Year

This award is presented to a top fundraising event that is making the future of cancer research possible.



Honoree:
Bob McAuley
and Team
Harmony4Hope

Lifetime Achievement Award

A truly standout accomplishment, this award is presented to recognize a dedicated supporter whose efforts over many years are unparalleled.



Honorees:
Mickey Leigh
and Anthony
Patterson
*Joey Ramone
Birthday Bash*

Corporate Champion of the Year

This award is proudly presented to a philanthropic partner that sets a high bar for all-star generosity.



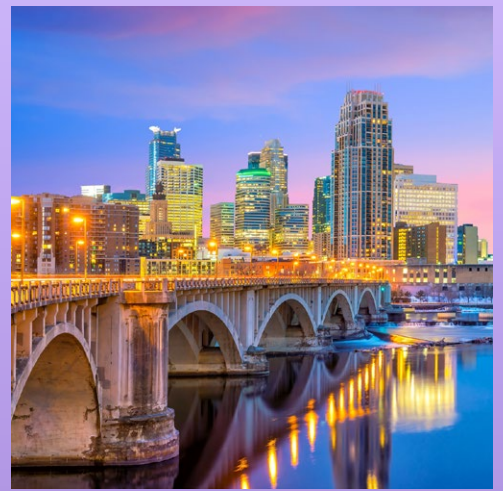
Honoree:
Chicago White Sox
Charities and Liam
and Kristi Hendriks
Close Out Cancer

Upcoming Lymphoma Walks

When you walk with the Lymphoma Research Foundation, you will be part of a community focusing on finding cures for lymphoma through confidence, compassion, and care.

For more information and to register to walk visit lymphoma.org/walks.

Thank You To Our Sponsors



Minnesota Lymphoma Walk
Saturday, June 8



New York Lymphoma Walk
Saturday, June 15



Chicago Lymphoma Walk
Sunday, July 28



Donor Spotlight: Leigh Olson

Leigh Olson's experience with the Lymphoma Research Foundation started in a doctor's waiting room. It was 1999, and she was in Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago with her father for his first appointment after being diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL). At the time, Leigh knew little about the disease, treatment options, or the potential outcomes. But there in the waiting room was a pamphlet from the Cure for Lymphoma organization (which later became the Lymphoma Research Foundation). It's what introduced her to the organization and started her role as an avid advocate and supporter of the Foundation's mission.



It was empowering. It was my father's illness creating an opportunity for someone else.

Leaving a Mark Wherever She Goes

About six months after her father went into remission, Leigh absconded with his Rolodex and began a letter-writing campaign to everyone he knew. When a Lymphoma Research Foundation board member caught wind of her efforts, they offered to match gifts received through the campaign up to \$25,000. Leigh quickly raised her \$25,000, and those funds and the match ended up supporting a significant research grant at the University of Chicago.

"It was empowering. It was my father's illness creating an opportunity for someone else," Leigh said.

Leigh has lived in several places across the United States and wherever she goes, she brings her passion for fundraising with her. When she moved from Chicago to Dallas, the Lymphoma Research Foundation's leadership proposed that she set up a Dallas chapter – she did just that. She hit the ground running, starting a robust fundraising program and hosting the Foundation's first Dallas Lymphoma Walk in 2001.

Leigh recently hosted the 22nd Dallas Lymphoma Walk, which has now raised millions of dollars since its inception. Over the years, her three daughters have also joined her to raise funds for the Foundation – knocking on doors, running lemonade stands, the works. Leigh believes in showing her children the value of hard work for a good cause.



From left, Ramesh Subrahmanian (Member, Board of Directors); Robert Werner (Member Emeritus, Board of Directors); Leigh Olson (Secretary, Board of Directors)

Today, 25 years later, Leigh serves as Secretary on the Foundation's Board of Directors. At an event at a Miami area golf club that Leigh and her husband had just joined, they met Jerry and Barbara Freundlich, co-founders of the Lymphoma Research Foundation. This led to Leigh working with Barbara to set up Swirl, a new wine-tasting fundraising event series for the Foundation. Along the way, Leigh learned more about the workings of the Board and was elected to join in 2013.

While the pandemic put an end to several traditional fundraising events, Leigh has worked tirelessly to get people excited and involved with the Lymphoma Research Foundation again and has launched new programs to help achieve just that. One such event is the Foundation's South Florida Golf Invitational, the first of which took place in April 2024. Leigh had a goal of raising \$250,000 to \$300,000 to support the Foundation's mission and successfully raised more than \$330,000.

"My strength is in fundraising and connecting people," Leigh said. A statement that could not be truer.

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Raising a lot of money is always rewarding, but the common thread is the Foundation and all the good they do to support patients, caregivers, and their loved ones.

Doing Good for Good

Through Leigh's many fundraising endeavors, she has never lost sight of what these efforts help to achieve. "Raising a lot of money is always rewarding," Leigh says, "but the common thread is the Lymphoma Research Foundation and all the good they do to support patients, caregivers, and their loved ones."

Leigh enjoys attending the Foundation's in-person educational events so she can see the sense of empowerment and relief that they bring to those who participate. "As much as I love fundraising, witnessing the impact on the lymphoma community from the Foundation's resources can be even more rewarding."

Leigh also notes that these events allow her to connect with others in the lymphoma community and encourage them to pay it forward just as she has for so many years. While Leigh knows that not everyone is immediately drawn to the fundraising process, she hopes that by interacting with people she can show them how easy and rewarding it can be. Leigh recalls meeting a lymphoma survivor in 2000 who told her, "I'm not a fundraiser." Leigh continued to talk to the survivor about the important work that the Lymphoma Research Foundation does – education, research, and raising awareness – all of which were meaningful to the survivor. Today, that individual is one of the Foundation's top fundraisers, demonstrating that she was more of a fundraiser than she had originally known.

"It's really easy to sell the Lymphoma Research Foundation," Leigh says.

Inspired by Science

Leigh's passion for the Foundation is also motivated by the science the organization helps to advance. She notes how critical the Lymphoma Research Foundation's research programming is in helping to fine-tune treatments and mitigate long-term side effects for survivors.

Sadly, Leigh's father succumbed to a secondary infection a few years after his initial lymphoma diagnosis. But what brings Leigh hope today is witnessing how the treatment landscape continues to evolve, and her wish is that this can help other families impacted by lymphoma to have a different outcome. "If he had been diagnosed with stage four DLBCL today, perhaps it'd be another story."

With 45 top lymphoma doctors collaborating on the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board and over \$80M in lymphoma-specific research awarded to Foundation grantees, Leigh knows the future for those touched by this disease is getting brighter – and the funds Leigh raises help illuminate that path.

Upcoming Education Programs

Whether you are newly diagnosed, want detailed information about your lymphoma subtype, are looking for ongoing support, or seeking help with long-term survivorship, we are here to help.

6/27 - Update on Follicular Lymphoma Webinar

7/3 - Virtual Ask the Doctor: Information for Newly Diagnosed Patients

7/17 - Update on Hodgkin Lymphoma Webinar

9/14 - West Coast Lymphoma Workshop

10/26 - 10/27 - Educational Forum on Lymphoma

Visit lymphoma.org/programs
to register and learn more.

2024 Public Policy Agenda

The Lymphoma Research Foundation is proud to be a national thought leader and advocate for policies and legislation that will improve the lives of people with lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). The Foundation leads efforts to ensure the needs and perspectives of the lymphoma community are considered and integrated into public policy at the federal level.

The 2024 Public Policy Agenda outlines the Foundation's policy priorities for the year ahead and will direct the efforts of thousands of patient and caregiver advocates across the United States. This year, the Foundation will continue to prioritize federal funding for lymphoma research and education, ensure patient access to high-quality cancer care, and place a unique focus on the needs of survivors.



Supporting Lymphoma Research

The Lymphoma Research Foundation supports increasing federal investment in lymphoma research and funding for agencies like the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) so that effective new lymphoma treatments can become available to patients with greater efficiency. These efforts include:

- Increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), including research intended to better understand every subtype of the disease.
- Greater support for the nation's clinical trials enterprise and improvements to infrastructure, including efficiencies to the clinical trial development process, with a focus on patient-centered outcomes and health equity.
- Continued support for the FDA, including the Oncology Center of Excellence, to ensure efficient review of new cancer therapies and integration of the patient voice in drug development and review activities.
- Increased support for research and regulations that aid in the development of new therapies for rare lymphoma subtypes and underserved patient populations.
- Increased support for research activity to understand the needs of underserved patient populations, including those with cancer and those who are cancer survivors.

Supporting Access to Quality Cancer Care

The Lymphoma Research Foundation endorses policies which seek to increase access to comprehensive lymphoma treatment and cancer survivorship care, including:

- Legislation and regulations that ensure access to adequate and affordable health insurance coverage for people with lymphoma and protect access to quality cancer care, as well as maintaining coverage for preexisting conditions.
- Payment and delivery reform efforts that assist health care providers in improving the quality of cancer care in all communities in the United States.
- A health care system that collects real-world data to support access to therapies and quality improvement.
- Coverage standards in public and private health insurance systems to protect access to all approved anticancer regimens, including but not limited to oral and intravenous drugs, injections, cellular and gene therapy, surgery, radiation, and transplantation.

- Implementation of policies which support the development of new therapies and clinical trials for rare diseases and policies which assist and encourage patient participation.
- Revision of clinical trial enrollment criteria to encourage more diversity among trial enrollees, accompanied by outreach and education efforts to increase trial enrollment among the elderly, rural residents, and ethnic and racial minorities.
- Policies intended to address the consistent drug shortages in the United States which threaten access to life-saving lymphoma treatments.

Supporting Lymphoma Survivors

The Lymphoma Research Foundation endorses legislation which recognizes the increased number of cancer survivors in the United States and the needs of people living with and after a lymphoma diagnosis. These efforts include:

- Legislation which prioritizes the study of cancer survivorship and the needs of cancer survivors.
- Legislation which protects access to quality health insurance for anyone with a preexisting condition.
- Health care payment and delivery reforms that will incentivize delivery of quality survivorship care for patients across the cancer care continuum. Among these reforms are education and provider reimbursement for cancer care planning to improve planning services for all people with lymphoma.

Become an Advocate

When you register to become an advocate, you will support the Foundation's public policy agenda and join a network of more than 5,000 Americans who want to make certain the voice of the lymphoma community is heard. Visit lymphoma.org/advocacy to become an advocate today.



Conquering the Unknowns in Lymphoma



It is fascinating to think back over the last 30 years and observe what has changed and why. The science has advanced exponentially and will change the field forever.

Henry Stanley Plummer, one of the founders of the Mayo Clinic, once wrote, “What is research? It is nothing more or less than trying to find out the things that are unknown. When you are not doing that, and you think you are doing research, you are not.”

This quote has echoed throughout Dr. Thomas Habermann’s research career for decades and has helped him stay focused on the art of discovery. As the first Chair of the Mayo Clinic’s Lymphoma Group, the former Chair of the Lymphoma Research Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), a clinician, and prolific researcher, he brings passion and drive to every study he works on and every patient he works with.

Dr. Habermann grew up the son of a general practitioner in a small Wisconsin town, and – according to his mother – picked up his father’s drive to help people through difficult times, understand patients as people, and if possible, conquer the unknowns of the ailments that beset them.

Of all the medical challenges arrayed in front of him at the start of his own medical career, Dr. Habermann was drawn to lymphoma. He found it a worthy foe. As a disease, he says, “It’s very complex. It breaks a lot of rules.”

Investigating Lymphoma From All Angles

Dr. Habermann received his MD from Creighton University before completing his residency and fellowship at Mayo Clinic’s Rochester campus. After joining the Mayo faculty in the late 1980s, Dr. Habermann began building the Mayo Clinic’s lymphoma program with former SAB member Dr. Thomas Witzig and subsequently, Dr. Stephen Ansell, a current SAB member. “It is fascinating to think back over the last 30 years and observe what has changed and why,” Dr. Habermann says, citing new drugs, beginning with rituximab (Rituxan), treatments to reduce side effects, and advancing computer technology as a few examples. “The science has advanced exponentially and will change the field forever.”

In 1986, early on in his time as the Chair of the Mayo Clinic Lymphoma Group, he launched the Lymphoma Database Project to draw out epidemiological clues and markers of the disease.

He notes that in putting the Lymphoma Project together laid the groundwork for the Molecular Epidemiology Resource (MER), which was part of a Lymphoma Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) grant that was funded for 20 years by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). This database then became the Lymphoma





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I try to recognize the background of patients, who they are, what they have done in life.

Epidemiology of Outcomes (LEO) database, in partnership with eight institutions. Habermann has served as the co-chair of clinical cores of these grants since 2001.

Dr. Habermann has worked on numerous clinical trials that have proven central in the understanding and treatment of the disease. He contributed to the testing of rituximab, which became a key part of the treatment plan for B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma. His work showed that patients treated with this drug were likely to live longer. He led a major study, known as the ECOG 4494 trial, that provided strong evidence of rituximab's effectiveness in treating the aggressive form of this lymphoma when combined with standard chemotherapy. This evidence helped convince the FDA to approve rituximab for this purpose, significantly changing the way doctors treat the disease.

He was also an author on six additional clinical trials regarding the FDA-approved indications for various blood cancer therapies including alpha recombinant interferon and 2'-deoxycoformycin (for the U.S. Intergroup hairy cell leukemia trial), yttrium-90 ibritumomab, and lenalidomide. He's also worked on 15 other drugs, some of which continue in development. Additionally, he's an author on more than 30 papers in multiple clinical trials. His mentorships and other academic contributions are too numerous to mention.

As a clinical researcher, Dr. Habermann blends his patients' personal histories into his research practice. He makes sure his patients are aware of his approach, so they can feel, to the greatest extent possible, that they are contributing to the greater good.

"I try to recognize the background of patients, who they are, what they have done in life. I have been known to put some of these things in clinical notes," he said. "Establishing trust is so critical." He goes on to say that once you identify with the patient and they with you, you can accomplish so much more, both clinically and in research.

Ushering in the Next Generation of Researchers

Teaching is the through-line that, for Dr. Habermann, pulls his research and clinical work into the future. In the midst of his practical work, Dr. Habermann has received six "Teacher of the Year Awards" from the Mayo Clinic Fellows Association, the "Distinguished Mayo Educator Award" in 2009, the year in which the Department of Medicine also cited his "Distinguished Contributions in Medical Education," plus a "Lifetime Achievement for Outstanding Contributions to Medical Education" in 2012 and several other teaching awards.

After a 20-year career that included serving as Associate Dean in the Mayo Clinic, Dr. Habermann stepped down from the educational faculty of the graduate school and is now focusing on his patient practice and clinical research.

He continues to recruit and mentor researchers to study lymphoma and contribute to the Foundation's research grant program. Dr. Habermann points with pride to these people – not just their accomplishments. He's proud to have worked with many researchers, such as Svetomir Markovic, MD, Ph.D., who he helped bring to the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Markovic structured the Melanoma Group with the model that the Lymphoma Group implemented. Dr. Markovic also created a nanoparticle approach with rituximab, the phase 1 trial of which was reported at the American Society of Hematology (ASH) annual meeting in 2023.

Supporting the Lymphoma Research Foundation

Dr. Habermann says that he has found his work with the Lymphoma Research Foundation “extremely rewarding.” He's worked on several of the Foundation's projects and was elected to the Scientific Advisory Board in 2004.

A research grant from the Lymphoma Research Foundation was a turning point for him, enabling him to deepen his dedication and commitment to lymphoma research at a critical time in his life. While on medical leave himself, recovering from prostate cancer surgery, he wrote a successful proposal for the Foundation to study mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) – a typically underserved and understudied patient population. Subsequently, the Foundation funded several papers he worked on, including many in molecular epidemiology research.

Dr. Habermann knows from experience the value that the Lymphoma Research Foundation community provides to researchers, not to mention the funding it makes available. He is proud to contribute to grant projects, noting that, “these grants are extremely competitive.” But the value of working on one is immense: “The lists of recipients have become a who's who of individuals in their early careers. The opportunities for further career development in junior individuals are remarkable.”

Dr. Habermann says he's extremely proud to work with the Foundation, given its important role in advancing cures, prolonging life, and improving outcomes for lymphoma patients. He appreciates how the Foundation supports researchers in clinical research and basic science, and how it contributes to advancements in lymphoma care.



The opportunities [the Foundation provides] for further career development in junior individuals are remarkable.



Where Are They Now?

Lymphoma Rounds

15 YEARS IN REVIEW



The Lymphoma Research Foundation's disease specificity and hyper-focus on finding cures for every type of lymphoma ensure the next generation of cancer researchers dedicate their careers to studying lymphoma and world-leading lymphoma experts collaborate and accelerate the pace of scientific discovery.

In 2008, the Lymphoma Research Foundation expanded its first-in-class lymphoma education programming and developed Lymphoma Rounds. Lymphoma Rounds programs provide a forum for healthcare professionals to meet regularly and address issues specific to the diagnosis and treatment of their lymphoma patients. Program participants network, share best practices, and learn the latest information on new therapies and advances in the management of lymphoma through interactive case studies presented by lymphoma experts.

The goal of the programs is to enable participants to better summarize the latest developments in lymphoma diagnosis, treatment, and management; apply best practices for treating lymphoma patients; inform patients about potential clinical trial opportunities; and establish a network of healthcare professionals who work with lymphoma patients.

The program series debuted in Chicago and today it is held in eight major U.S. cities including Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. Lymphoma Rounds partners with over 60 U.S.-based academic and medical centers to facilitate the planning and case presentations at Lymphoma Rounds activities. In 2021, the program was expanded to include a virtual component. The National Lymphoma Rounds remains a permanent virtual component to the programming, led by the Foundation's National Steering Committee comprising lymphoma experts from all over the country.

Almost two decades since its inaugural program, Lymphoma Rounds has now become a hallmark of the lymphoma-focused educational activities designed to increase the knowledge, skills, and performance of healthcare professionals and to maximize the quality of care for lymphoma patients. Former Chairman of the Medical Affiliates Board and Lymphoma Research Foundation Scientific Advisory Board member emeritus, Morton Coleman, MD, was instrumental in founding Lymphoma Rounds. He reflected on the impact the program has had on the healthcare professional community concerned with lymphoma.

What was the impetus for developing Lymphoma Rounds?

I observed a group of physicians in New York holding a local breast cancer program. It sparked the idea that it would be a great opportunity for the Lymphoma Research Foundation to bring together physicians in the local community throughout the county to discuss and interact about the latest information on new therapies and advances in lymphoma.

Why were you passionate about being a part of creating it?

I have always been passionate about educating both the public and my fellow physicians about lymphoma. At the time, no programs like this existed for healthcare professionals in lymphoma, and I wanted to make education a cornerstone of what I gave back to the community.

What makes Lymphoma Rounds unique?

It truly is a program that is unique to the Lymphoma Research Foundation. It fosters camaraderie that is hard to find outside of a physician's own institution and is a step forward in lymphoma education for physicians. Each doctor has dealt with unique cases and therefore has different perspectives to share, and this ultimately helps impact patients.

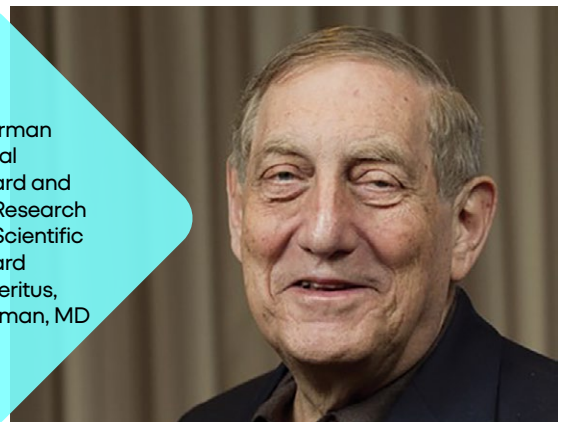
How have you seen the program evolve over the years?

It has grown larger than anyone could have ever imagined. The program is now hosted in eight major cities. The Foundation partners with over 60 U.S.-based academic and medical centers to facilitate the planning and case presentations. Witnessing it grow and encourage collegial and inter-institutional participants has been both exciting and rewarding.

How does Lymphoma Rounds help to improve patient outcomes?

The knowledge we gain at Lymphoma Rounds is very special and has a direct impact on patients. The education at Lymphoma Rounds provides specific information geared toward treating lymphoma – and there is no other opportunity like this. Lymphoma Rounds truly speaks to the Lymphoma Research Foundation's commitment to advancing cures and ensuring a brighter future for all those touched by this disease.

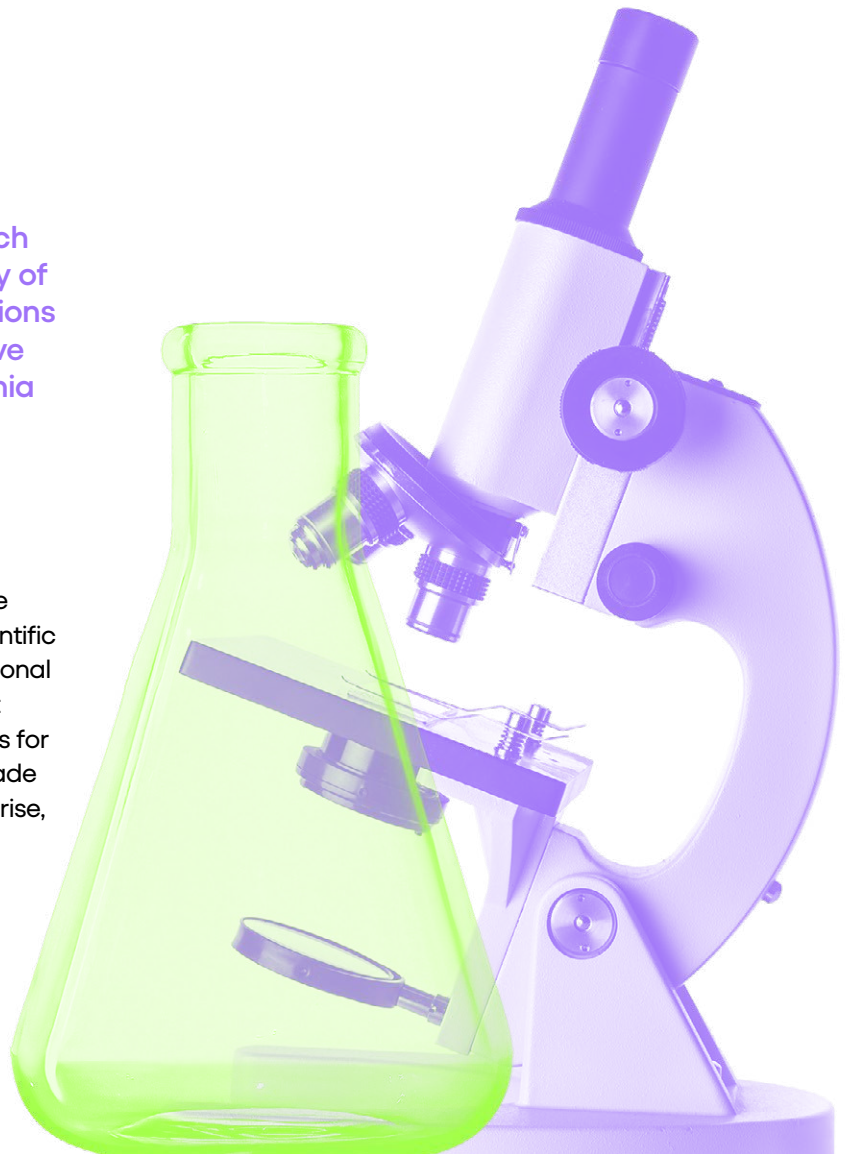
Former Chairman of the Medical Affiliates Board and Lymphoma Research Foundation Scientific Advisory Board member emeritus, Morton Coleman, MD



Meet the 2024 Career Development Award and Postdoctoral Fellowship Research Grantees

The Lymphoma Research Foundation announced its 2024 grant class – 28 research grants awarded to scientists based at many of the world’s leading cancer research institutions – totaling more than \$3.5 million in innovative lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) research.

The 2024 grantee class encompasses 18 medical and academic institutions, with research initiatives investigating several lymphoma subtypes, genetic mechanisms, and emerging therapeutic methods. The grant selection process is led by the Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), which is made up of 45 international lymphoma experts dedicated to seeking out the most innovative and promising lymphoma research projects for investment. Since its inception, the Foundation has made major contributions to the lymphoma research enterprise, awarding more than 500 research grants totaling more than \$80 million.



Clinical Career Development Award (CDA)



Tomohiro Aoki, MD, PhD
*University Health Network
Peykoff Health Equity Initiative*

Cancer cells exist within a greater tumor microenvironment that is modified by tumor cells to support their growth and proliferation. These cells can also modify their environment to help avoid immune detection, thereby supporting continued survival within the body. “Our research project focuses on improving knowledge about how malignant cells evade the immune system to translate findings into better treatments for patients,” explains Dr. Aoki, a clinical research fellow at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Canada. He hopes that by studying the greater cancer “ecosystem,” his work will identify novel treatment targets and pave the way for innovative clinical trials in lymphoma.

Dr. Aoki was named a Lymphoma Scientific Research Mentoring Program (LSRMP) Scholar in 2021 and has been an active member of the Lymphoma Research Foundation community ever since. In fact, he is the first person to receive all three of the Foundation’s major research grants, including an LSRMP grant, a Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant, and a Career Development Award (CDA).

As a CDA recipient, he looks forward to giving back to the Foundation’s community and supporting other aspiring lymphoma scholars. “I aim to be actively involved in mentoring activities for the next generation of scientists and physicians,” he says.

“I have treated numerous patients diagnosed with cancers, including lymphoid cancers, as a physician and witnessed many of my patients suffering from progressive/refractory diseases,” says Dr. Aoki. “From this experience, I felt a strong desire to pursue translational research to improve patient survival by developing more-effective therapies.”

Looking ahead to the future, Dr. Aoki is optimistic that advancements in immunotherapy will continue to improve outcomes for lymphoma patients, and he looks forward to contributing to the research that drives this progress. “I would like to continue innovative research that leads to clinical trials and contributes to improving clinical outcomes of lymphoid cancer patients,” he says.



Preteesh Jain, MD, PhD
*University of Texas MD
Anderson Cancer Center*

Chemotherapy-sparing treatment regimens are of great interest for many patients with lymphoma due to the variety of short- and long-term toxicities associated with these therapies. To this end, Dr. Jain’s research proposal is aimed at assessing the safety and efficacy of a novel Bruton tyrosine kinase (BTK) inhibitor, pirtobrutinib, in combination with the monoclonal antibody rituximab in a phase 2 clinical trial involving patients with mantle cell lymphoma (MCL). Dr. Jain hopes that this novel agent will elicit similar response rates to those seen with other BTK inhibitors but without the associated cardiac safety concerns. “Through this trial, we intend to develop a new chemo-free combination to treat MCL and also investigate a time-limited therapy strategy based on a cutting-edge molecular minimal residual disease (MRD).”

Dr. Jain has been involved in lymphoma research for many years, having worked with patients with lymphoid malignancies as a clinical oncology fellow at Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, India. He earned his doctoral degree from the Elmezzzi Graduate School of Molecular Medicine at Northwell Health in New York, where he studied the function of immune cells in chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). He is now working as a clinical researcher in lymphoid malignancies at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, where his work focuses on targeted therapies in MCL, including the development of clinical trials to evaluate novel therapies in this disease. “In addition, I am highly interested in developing newer molecular tools to predict relapse in this lymphoma and on developing the impact of MRD testing in this disease with these novel therapies,” he says.

Dr. Jain is optimistic about the future of MCL care and what new treatment approaches will mean for patients. “Several newer agents have been approved, and these agents are providing us an option to treat patients with minimal or no chemotherapy without compromising on the efficacy and safety,” he says. “These treatments are providing higher responses, a much better safety profile, and better ease of administration compared with chemotherapy, and future treatments in MCL are very promising.”



Niloufer Khan, MD

*City of Hope Comprehensive
Cancer Center
Health Equity Initiative*

Cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL) is a chronic form of cancer that causes pain, discomfort, and itchiness that can affect patients' well-being and quality of life. "Itch is a common symptom for patients with CTCL, but it has a complex pathogenesis and can be challenging to treat," explains Dr. Khan. Through her research, she hopes to determine how itch can be better characterized in the clinic to support patients and understand how it affects their overall well-being. "We will also study whether integrative and supportive care interventions like mindfulness-based therapy can help patients," she says. "This is a way for patients to become more aware of thoughts, feelings, and sensations in a non-judgmental way. Our hope is that this will help patients with CTCL better manage their itch and anxiety."

Dr. Khan's interest in medicine was sparked at a young age by her mother, who was a pediatrician. She earned her medical degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Ohio and completed a residency in pediatrics before pursuing a fellowship in hematology/oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. She is now an assistant professor of medicine in the Lymphoma Division at City of Hope (California), where she is focused on understanding patient-reported outcomes in CTCL care. "I have always been interested in health-related quality of life and treatment-related toxicities," she says. "After rotating in clinics as a fellow with my mentors at MSK, I realized that patients with CTCL have unique and profound unmet needs in terms of improving their quality of life."

With the support of the Lymphoma Research Foundation, Dr. Khan hopes to establish herself as a leading expert in translational health outcomes research. "My patients always inspire me to ask more questions and identify ways to improve their health and well-being," she says. "I hope my work will focus on identifying symptoms with the greatest impact on patient quality of life, designing effective symptom-based interventions to answer those questions, and facilitating the implementation and uptake of those interventions."

Dr. Kahn was also a 2021 Scholar through the Lymphoma Scientific Research Mentoring Program.



Christine Ryan, MD

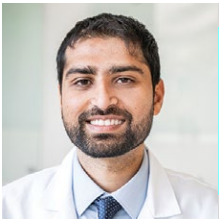
*Dana-Farber
Cancer Institute*

Upfront treatment of mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) typically involves an aggressive approach to treatment that offers the best chance of a durable and lasting response. Dr. Ryan is investigating a new first-line treatment regimen for MCL that combines novel targeted agents with traditional chemotherapy. "Our goal is that this approach will lead to longer initial disease control for patients with MCL and, therefore, improved outcomes," she explains.

Dr. Ryan – currently an instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School – was drawn to the field of hematologic oncology early in her career. "My first exposure to medicine was through shadowing a physician caring for patients with hematologic malignancies, and, thus, I was drawn to the fields of medicine and oncology simultaneously," she recalls. During her time as a medical student at Stanford University, she had the opportunity to work on a study investigating the use of ibrutinib in patients with CLL, which sparked her excitement for lymphoma research. "Seeing how a novel targeted therapy transformed outcomes for patients who otherwise had very limited treatment options was incredibly inspiring," she says.

Dr. Ryan's interest in lymphoma became personal when her grandmother was diagnosed with MCL. She notes that her grandmother's journey with lymphoma continues to fuel her passion for MCL research and serves as a driving factor for her dedication to the field. "Having experienced firsthand the emotional roller coaster of the cancer journey, I am motivated to be an oncologist who helps my patients through both their day-to-day struggles and the long-term journey of fighting lymphoma," she says. "My goal is for patients' lives to not be defined by their cancer or the challenges of treatment; thus, I aspire to lead clinical trials and research studies that will make this goal possible."

Dr. Ryan was also a 2023 Scholar through the Lymphoma Scientific Research Mentoring Program.



Harsh Shah, DO
The University of Utah

Immunotherapy with checkpoint inhibitors is commonly used for treatment of Hodgkin lymphoma after relapse. While many patients initially respond to these therapies, the development of resistance is common over time. Dr. Shah's research is focused on developing novel treatment approaches to help prevent or overcome resistance to improve outcomes for these patients. He is currently working on a clinical trial for a new drug that targets tumor-associated immune cells that may help contribute to checkpoint inhibitor resistance in the hopes of offering new treatment options for patients who are refractory to other leading treatment options.

"During my training, I often saw patients who had relapsed disease and were out of treatment options even after receiving a stem cell transplant and checkpoint inhibitors," says Dr. Shah. "This motivated me to come up with a [new] treatment concept that would especially help the young refractory patient population."

Dr. Shah completed his medical training at A.T. Still University in Missouri and a hematology/oncology fellowship at Wayne State University in Michigan. He is currently an assistant professor at Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah. With the support of the Lymphoma Research Foundation, he hopes to continue working on developing clinical trials to evaluate new treatment approaches to support Hodgkin lymphoma patients with refractory disease.

Dr. Shah is also a 2022 Scholar through the Lymphoma Scientific Research Mentoring Program.



Timothy Voorhees, MD
*The Ohio State University
College of Medicine*

Post-transplant lymphoproliferative disorders (PTLDs) are aggressive forms of lymphoma that develop after a solid organ transplant, often due to reactivation of the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) following the use of immunosuppressants. Treatment options for patients with PTLD are limited, but Dr. Voorhees seeks to remedy this. His research project proposes a series of clinical trials evaluating novel treatment approaches in PTLD, which he hopes will help improve outcomes for people with PTLD and even prevent PTLD from developing.

As a young student, Dr. Voorhees became interested in the field of immunology and was excited to find a place in medicine to utilize the knowledge and skills he had acquired in the field. He found that lymphoma research was a perfect match. "I was fortunate to have several amazing mentors along my journey who showed me not only the scientific aspects of the field but also the humanistic parts as well," he adds. "I absolutely love taking care of my patients, and there is nothing better than designing a trial to provide new treatments for patients with the possibility of better outcomes and a better-tolerated treatment."

Dr. Voorhees earned his medical degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine, where he now works as an assistant professor of clinical internal medicine. He was named a Lymphoma Scientific Research Mentoring Program (LSRMP) scholar in 2023 and is excited to continue giving back to the lymphoma community through his work. "The [Lymphoma Research] Foundation has played a critical role in the success of my early academic career, and I look forward to continuing to work with them in the future to improve outcomes for patients with lymphoma."

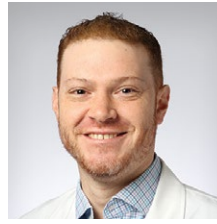


Yucai Wang, MD
Mayo Clinic, Rochester

Dr. Wang's interest in cancer research began during his time in medical school at Nanjing University in China. He had lost two close family members to lymphoma and was drawn to pursue a doctoral degree in cancer biology from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. During his postdoctoral research, he had the opportunity to shadow a clinical researcher who was leading a pivotal clinical trial of the Bruton tyrosine kinase (BTK) inhibitor ibrutinib for relapsed/refractory mantle cell lymphoma (MCL). "I was fascinated by the disease and excited by the promise of the first-in-class BTK inhibitor, and I became passionate about finding new therapies for MCL," he says.

To that end, Dr. Wang's research is focused on the evaluation of two new therapeutic approaches for the treatment of either untreated or relapsed MCL. Within these studies, he also hopes to analyze patterns to better understand how different patients respond and help determine which patients will benefit most from these therapies.

Dr. Wang is inspired by the many lymphoma researchers who have mentored him throughout his career. With the support of the Lymphoma Research Foundation, he hopes to further develop his expertise as a clinical trialist in lymphoma and aspires to one day be among the leading MCL researchers in the field.



Samuel Yamshon, MD
*Weill Medical College
of Cornell University*

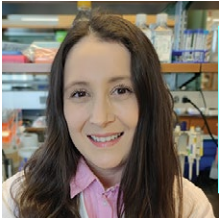
The lymphoma treatment landscape has been dramatically changed in recent years with the development of novel immunotherapies such as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cells and bispecific antibodies. Dr. Yamshon's research aims to build on the successes of these therapies to continually improve outcomes for patients. "Our research suggests that by using a pill to inhibit an enzyme called EZH2, we can enhance the response of the immune system and help supercharge it to be even more effective against lymphoma," he explains.

After earning his medical degree from the University of California, Davis, Dr. Yamshon went on to complete his residency and hematology/oncology fellowship at Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York, where he currently serves as an assistant professor of medicine. He was initially drawn to a career in lymphoma research in light of his family's own experiences with the disease. "My uncle was cured by a novel therapy on a clinical trial, and I know that if all of the advances we have today would have existed when my grandfather was diagnosed, he could still be alive today," he says. "My goal as a lymphoma doctor is to help advance lymphoma care so that families like mine can have more time with their loved ones."

Dr. Yamshon's commitment to lymphoma research is also inspired by the people he treats every day. "I am in constant awe of my patients, whose strength in the face of incredible adversity inspires me to continue to push to improve our treatments and move toward a cure for lymphoma," he says. "Ideally, I would like to see a cure for lymphoma and put myself out of a job. If that is not possible, I would like to see a further expansion of novel treatments that help us move away from chemotherapy and toward more-targeted or personalized therapies."

Dr. Yamshon was also a 2022 Scholar through the Lymphoma Scientific Research Mentoring Program.

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant

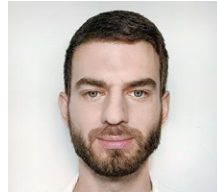


Ruth Alonso-Alonso, PhD
*The Trustees of Columbia University
in the City of New York*
Oliver W. Press, MD, PhD
Memorial Fellow

Angioimmunoblastic T-cell lymphoma (AITL) is an aggressive form of peripheral T-cell lymphoma. Therapeutic options for AITL are limited given patients' poor responses to conventional chemotherapy, resulting in poor outcomes and an unfavorable prognosis. Dr. Alonso-Alonso's work aims to illuminate the underlying mechanisms that drive the development and progression of AITL, with the hopes of identifying novel therapeutic targets that might improve outcomes for patients with this disease.

Dr. Alonso-Alonso's interest in cancer research began during her time as a master's student at the University of Cantabria in Spain. From there, she went on to complete her doctoral research at the Autonomous University of Madrid. "After working on my doctoral thesis, I got really interested in understanding the complexities of lymphoma and how it affects patients," she says. "Since then, I've dedicated my entire scientific career to studying lymphomas, with a special focus on T-cell lymphomas." She is now working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Cancer Genetics at Columbia University in New York, where she is currently working on characterizing a potential novel target in AITL known as SIP1.

"Through my investigation, I aim to advance the understanding of the intricate molecular landscape and personalized approach to treating lymphoma," explains Dr. Alonso-Alonso. She hopes to build on these experiences to launch a career as an independent researcher focusing on T-cell lymphomas, with the goal of developing innovative approaches toward diagnosis and management.



Gonzalo Blanco Ares, PhD
*The Feinstein Institutes for
Medical Research*
Bruce D. Cheson, MD Fellow

Care of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) is complicated by the immunodeficiency that is associated with the disease, which can lead to higher mortality rates due to not only CLL but also other cancers and severe infections. Studying this immunodeficiency has been challenging, though, due to the overabundance of leukemia cells within the blood, which invariably replace the healthy B cells responsible for immunity. To better understand the mechanisms that drive immunodeficiency in CLL, Dr. Blanco's research is focused on the molecular characterization of non-leukemia B cells found during the pre-leukemic stage of the disease, known as monoclonal B-cell lymphocytosis (MBL). Dr. Blanco hopes that this research will illuminate the mechanisms that drive immunodeficiency in MBL and CLL, as well as other forms of lymphoma, to support the development of novel therapeutic agents that will enhance quality of life and reduce infection-related deaths in lymphoma patients.

Dr. Blanco completed his doctoral research in biomedicine at Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona in Spain. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research at Northwell Health in New York. While his interest in lymphoma research began early on in his schooling, Dr. Blanco is also motivated by his father's own diagnosis of lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma, which arose after he completed his doctoral studies. "Clearly, this has significantly fueled my commitment to advancing research in the lymphoma field," he says.

Dr. Blanco hopes to prepare himself for a career as an independent investigator focused on understanding mechanisms of tumor immunity and developing novel preventive and therapeutic strategies for hematological malignancies. "Additionally, I aspire to mentor students and trainees to continue the infusion of creative minds into patient-oriented research and improve the management of the diseases that plague us," he says.



Alberto Carturan, MD
*University of Pennsylvania
Jamie Peykoff Follicular
Lymphoma Fellow*

Chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies represent a groundbreaking advancement in the treatment of lymphoma. While CAR T-cell therapies have produced remarkable results for many patients, these agents also carry a risk for potentially severe treatment complications, some of which may be life-threatening. Through his research, Dr. Carturan hopes to develop a novel CAR T-cell therapy that disrupts or prevents the signaling cascade that triggers these complications, with the goal of improving outcomes with this line of therapy.

Dr. Carturan completed his medical training at the University of Ferrara in Italy. After completing a clinical fellowship in hematology at the Marche Polytechnic University (Italy), he is now serving as a postdoctoral researcher in the Division of Hematology and Oncology and Center for Cellular Immunotherapies at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Carturan hopes to build upon his experiences as a research fellow to establish himself as a physician-scientist working toward improving the lymphoma treatment landscape. “I aspire to bridge the gap between bedside care and cutting-edge research, contributing to advancements that directly benefit patients with lymphoma,” he says.

Dr. Carturan’s dedication to lymphoma research is driven by the patients he has met throughout his medical career. “Witnessing their struggles and personal hardships has been a powerful motivator for me,” he says. “I’ve seen firsthand the impact that lymphoma has on individuals and their families, and it fuels my determination to continually enhance lymphoma therapies.” Through his work, he aspires to develop treatments that not only target the disease more precisely but also minimize adverse effects, ensuring a better overall experience for patients. “My commitment is rooted in the belief that every step forward in scientific understanding and medical innovation brings us closer to providing more-effective and compassionate care to those affected by lymphoma,” he explains.



Atish Kizhakeyil, PhD
*University of Texas MD
Anderson Cancer Center*

Alterations in the DTX1 gene are highly prevalent in diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL), but their clinical significance remains unclear. Using animal models and advanced genomic technologies, Dr. Kizhakeyil’s research is focused on characterizing these changes to better understand how they contribute to the malignant transformation of B cells. By doing so, he hopes that novel disease-causing pathways will emerge that can be targeted to support a disease-centered approach to treatment in patients with these alterations.

Dr. Kizhakeyil earned his medical degree from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. His passion for lymphoma research developed during this time from his experiences in a clinical internship program, during which he treated many patients with lymphoma across several Southeast Asian countries. “The interaction with patients as well as clinicians during this PhD attachment program instilled a sense of purpose and motivated me to engage in lymphoma research,” he says.

He is currently completing his postdoctoral research in DLBCL at the University of Texas MD Anderson and hopes to one day establish his own laboratory studying regulators of germinal B cells and lymphomagenesis. Through his research and beyond, Dr. Kizhakeyil hopes to pave the way for innovative approaches toward the treatment of B-cell lymphomas.



Benedikt Pelzer, MD
*Weill Medical College
of Cornell University
The Levine Family Fellowship*

Marginal zone lymphoma (MZL) is a slow-growing type of cancer that can eventually transform into a more aggressive diffuse B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) in a subset of patients. Both MZL and DLBCL are characterized by a high frequency of alterations in the NOTCH2 gene, and Dr. Pelzer's research is aimed at determining whether these alterations predispose patients with MZL to transformation and the subsequent worse treatment outcomes associated with the more aggressive disease. "Therefore," he says, "we would like to identify the underlying mechanisms as well as develop new and targeted treatments to salvage these patients in the future."

Dr. Pelzer's interest in hematological malignancies began during his time in medical school at the University of Duisburg-Essen School of Medicine in Germany. He was drawn to the lymphoma field as a resident at the University of Cologne (Germany), where he was able to work closely with lymphoma patients. "Sad and joyful stories are often close to each other on a hematology ward, sometimes even literally in the neighboring bed of the patient," he says. "It is my goal that we will be able to tell many more joyful stories in the future."

Through his research, Dr. Pelzer hopes to develop the skills necessary to establish himself as a physician-scientist working toward novel treatments for underserved patients with lymphoma. "As the unraveling of the molecular pathogenesis of lymphomas made great advances in the last decade, there are many new treatment strategies on their way," he says. "However, the subtype of lymphoma I am now working on is heavily neglected, encouraging me to elucidate pathomechanisms and subsequently develop new treatment options [for these patients]."



Michael Schneider, MD, PhD
*The Trustees of the
University of Pennsylvania*

Treatment of lymphoma has been revolutionized by the development of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies, which elicit robust responses in many patients. However, a large number of patients still relapse after CAR T-cell therapy, and Dr. Schneider would like to understand why. "As a physician, my very first clinical rotation was on the lymphoma service, taking care of hospitalized lymphoma patients," he recalls. "I was amazed at how dramatically the condition of many of these patients improved with treatment of their lymphoma. However, I was equally upset by the group of patients who did not benefit from their therapies. I knew that I wanted to play a role in improving treatment options for these patients."

Dr. Schneider completed his MD/PhD at Stony Brook University in New York. He is now working as a hematology/oncology fellow at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, where his research focuses on understanding the role of Notch signaling pathways in CAR T-cell responses. "As a scientist, I have a strong interest in exploring the role the immune system plays in fighting cancer and how we can use therapies to mobilize patients' immune systems toward this end," he explains.

Building on this work, Dr. Schneider is looking forward to a career as a physician-scientist straddling the interface between basic science and clinical medicine, with a focus on the optimization of immunotherapies. "Lymphoma is a heterogeneous disease and can respond to a variety of forms of immunotherapy, which appeals to me as a researcher," he says. "I am excited by the prospect of improving these immunotherapeutic options so that they will benefit a broader cohort of lymphoma patients."



Vignesh Shanmugam, MD
Brigham and Women's Hospital Inc.
Tom Condon Family Fellow

In many types of lymphoma, such as follicular lymphoma (FL), tumor cells are embedded in a rich microenvironment of non-malignant cells with which they regularly interact. The nature of these interactions has not been well studied, though, and Dr. Shanmugam is fascinated by what these mysteries could mean for lymphoma treatment. “Do these immune cells support the growth of lymphoma cells?” he asks. “If so, what are the molecular mechanisms, and how can we target these mechanisms for therapeutic effect?” To answer these questions, Dr. Shanmugam’s research is aimed at using cutting-edge genomic techniques to characterize the non-malignant cells in the FL microenvironment, including their molecular makeup and how they relate to disease aggressiveness. “I will also leverage artificial intelligence tools to identify the molecules produced by nearby non-malignant cells that drive the growth of malignant cells,” he adds. “This understanding can lead to new tests to correctly diagnose and treat patients with the most aggressive form of FL early.”

Dr. Shanmugam is a postdoctoral researcher at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Massachusetts. He earned his medical degree from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and completed a clinical fellowship in hematopathology at Brigham and Women’s Hospital at Harvard Medical School in Boston. With the support of the Foundation’s postdoctoral research fellowship, he hopes to establish himself as an independent investigator in the field of lymphoma research. “Our field is at a critical inflection point when we can directly observe and manipulate lymphoma cells and the cells that support them at a molecular level,” he says. “These technologies are poised to transform our understanding of the fundamental mechanisms of lymphomagenesis and pave the way for developing mechanism-based therapies. It is an incredibly exciting time to be a scientist and lymphoma researcher.”

Dr. Shanmugam’s commitment to lymphoma research is also driven by the people he sees in the clinic. “The patients I care for are my most important source of inspiration,” he says. “They constantly reinforce my commitment to science and lymphoma research. It’s immensely gratifying to channel this inspiration to generate new knowledge that has the potential to make a direct impact on lymphoma patients.”



Moah Soan, DVM, PhD
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Jamie Peykoff Follicular Lymphoma Fellow

Breakthrough therapies such as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies and bispecific antibodies have transformed the care of patients with follicular lymphoma (FL) such that many patients now experience deep and meaningful remissions. A common problem with these therapies, though, is the phenomenon of antigen escape, by which a subset of tumor cells evades the therapeutic immune response due to a lack of expression of the target molecule on the surface of the cell. This can lead to clinical relapse. “To address this issue, we propose a solution called ‘bystander killing,’ which aims to prevent antigen escape by leveraging localized immune responses that are antigen-independent to eliminate antigen-negative cells,” explains Dr. Soan.

Dr. Soan’s interest in lymphoma began with her own battle with cancer, and she is continually inspired by the patients she sees every day as a researcher. “They provide me with the motivation to work harder, knowing that our efforts hold the potential to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those affected by lymphoma.”

Having completed her doctoral research and an infectious and immune biology fellowship at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. Dr. Soan is now working as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University. Her research focuses on molecular mechanisms that drive bystander killing and that can be leveraged to improve responses to T-cell-based therapies. “With a passion for scientific inquiry and a commitment to excellence, I aspire to make meaningful contributions to the field of cancer immunology and lead efforts toward more-effective and personalized treatment options for individuals battling lymphoma and cancer,” she says.

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Tackling Obstacles On and Off the Field



In many ways, Timmy Ward is a typical college senior, majoring in sociology and playing football for the Rutgers Scarlet Knights – a Big Ten powerhouse. However, what most people don't know is what he has had to overcome to get here.

Growing up in Pennsylvania, Timmy was always a talented athlete who excelled in sports. In high school, he participated in football, wrestling, track, and baseball before concentrating on football and wrestling to pursue his lifelong dream of playing college football.

Everything was going according to plan until July 2018, the summer before his junior year in high school, when Timmy first noticed a swollen lymph node under his right armpit. Initially, he didn't think much of it and figured it would go away on its own. However, much to his dismay, the lump grew. He also began to feel out of shape, which didn't make sense to him, as he was exercising vigorously. Timmy began to realize that something had to be wrong.

At the end of the fall 2018 football season, Timmy went to Penn State Medical Center to get checked out and was ultimately diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma (HL). The diagnosis caught Timmy and his close-knit family completely off guard.

"I was scared and confused at first, with my mind going all over the place," explained Ward. "I didn't know what treatment would be like, and part of me was wondering, 'Why me?' But once I accepted the fact that I had lymphoma, I realized that this was something I needed to deal with."

Timmy's parents shared the news of his diagnosis with his teachers and coaches, explaining that he would be missing much of the rest of the school year to focus on treatment.

"The first week of treatment was rough – I was nauseous and sick," said Ward. "By the third week, I received a blood transfusion, which helped, but my life quickly became two treatments one week, one treatment the next, one week off, repeat."



Timmy began treatment the first week of December 2018 and completed it in late February 2019. His entire family – including parents, grandparents, sisters, and cousins – came with him to the hospital to help celebrate his final treatment and watch as he rang the bell to mark his final day of treatment.

“Being able to do that with my whole family there was really cool – it was more about finally being able to breathe freely without any weight on our shoulders. I still had a port in my chest, and I was happy just to be with my family and to be able to finally relax with them without the worry of treatment looming.”

Timmy was declared cancer-free on May 1, 2019, and looked forward to the day he could rejoin his team on the football field again.

“One thing that became clear to me real fast was that the simple things in life – like being able to play football and be with my family – these are the most important things to me,” said Ward. “Sometimes, you can take the monotony of life for granted, but when that’s taken from you, you really miss it, and you realize how special it all is.”

Having missed the rest of the 2019 school year and football season, Timmy returned to finish his junior year in the fall of 2019. He had lost more than 20 pounds during treatment, but as soon as his chemo port was removed and his energy had returned, he was ready to hit the ground running. He began lifting weights and training to build back his former football frame and started practicing with his high school team again in August of 2020.

“Everyone did so much to support me and my family – it had a huge impact on me,” he said. “One of the other teams we were playing in a tournament raised money on my behalf, and I didn’t even know anyone in that area. It blew my mind how people wanted to help me.”

Another Setback

Timmy’s return to football came with its own challenges. In one of his first games back, he tore his ACL, requiring knee surgery, which meant that he was sidelined again. Having already made it through lymphoma treatment, Timmy buckled down to begin the long road to recovery.

During his senior year in high school, when it was time to select a college, Timmy still had his sights set on playing Big Ten football. But having missed so much of the prior season due to injury, his chances seemed slim. Then, an





“

I want to help others going through a lymphoma diagnosis get through the hard stuff because I know how I felt when I was going through it.”

opportunity presented itself when Rutgers offered him a position as an equipment manager for the football team with a chance to try out for the team at the end of the season. He accepted the position and took the job as seriously as he had taken football.

That dedication paid off, and after a successful tryout, Timmy was offered a spot on the team as a walk-on in 2022. He has played in 22 games over the last two seasons, helping the team to a winning season in 2023. In the Pinstripe Bowl last December, Timmy made a pivotal play that changed the trajectory of the game. Down 17-14 in the third quarter, Timmy's teammate blocked a punt by the opposing team, and Timmy quickly secured the ball in the end zone and scored a touchdown to give Rutgers the lead. Rutgers went on to defeat the University of Miami 31-24.

“I was excited when I got to come back and play, as it's always been my dream to play Division 1 football,” said Ward. “My parents were even able to watch me play at Penn State this past year. Since I'm from Pennsylvania originally, playing on the field I had grown up idolizing was a cool full-circle moment.”

Helping Others Stay Positive

With his lymphoma at bay and his college football career taking off, Timmy has recently gotten involved with the Lymphoma Research Foundation and has a strong desire to give back.

“I want to help others going through a lymphoma diagnosis get through the hard stuff because I know how I felt when I was going through it,” he said. “You don't get taught what to do when you're diagnosed with cancer in school, and you have to figure it out on your own. I want to be a mentor and to help people get through those tough times.”

Timmy credits much of his recovery and subsequent football success to staying positive.

“You need to let the people around you love you and encourage you,” he said. “Only you know what you can and can't do, so do your best to stay positive. The Foundation is great at connecting people and sharing their stories. Just knowing that other people have gone through the same stuff you're going through and have come out on the other side gives you hope that you can do it too.”

The Lymphoma Research Foundation's volunteer Scientific Advisory Board, comprised of 45 world-renowned lymphoma experts, guides the Foundation's research activities, seeking out the most innovative and promising lymphoma research projects for support.

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Upcoming Events

6.27

Update on Follicular Lymphoma Webinar

7.3

Virtual Ask the Doctor: Information for Newly Diagnosed Patients

7.17

Update on Hodgkin Lymphoma Webinar

7.28

Chicago Lymphoma Walk

9.14

West Coast Lymphoma Workshop

9.25

Annual Gala

9.5-9.8

Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend

10.26-10.27

Educational Forum on Lymphoma



Want to receive information about Lymphoma Research Foundation events happening in your area? Visit lymphoma.org/emailsSignup to select your email preferences and stay up to date with the latest from the Foundation.





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When you include the Lymphoma Research Foundation in your estate plan, you are investing in the most promising research that has the greatest potential to dramatically improve the lives of those impacted by lymphoma.

To learn more about Planned Giving, contact
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