

MRF & MRA Commend the Senate Appropriations Committee for Including \$30 million for Defense-Funded Melanoma Research in FY2021 Bill

WASHINGTON, DC – The [Melanoma Research Alliance](#) (MRA) and the [Melanoma Research Foundation](#) (MRF) commend the Senate Appropriations Committees for including \$30 million for the Department of Defense-funded melanoma research in the Fiscal 2021 Department of Defense Appropriations bill. On Tuesday, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the FY2021 Defense Appropriations bill, along with the \$30 million for the Peer Reviewed Melanoma Research Program (PRMRP).

Congress, in its Fiscal 2020 Defense Appropriations bill provided \$20 million for the Peer Reviewed Melanoma Research Program, and the House included \$20 million in its version of the Fiscal 2021 Defense Appropriations bill, approved by the House earlier this year.

The Senate Appropriations Committee cited *“the committee understands that melanoma diagnoses are increasing among active duty servicemembers and that melanoma is the fifth most common cancer among veterans. Recent research suggests that exposure to high levels of solar radiation in young adulthood is associated with a higher risk of melanoma mortality. Given the extreme and harsh conditions servicemembers face in theater and the rise of this aggressive and frequently deadly form of cancer, the Committee encourages the Department to continue its investments in melanoma research.”*

As the leading nonprofit funders of cutting-edge melanoma science, the MRF and MRA welcome this new commitment to advance the field of melanoma research.

Since 2009, melanoma has been eligible to receive Defense funding through the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). While conditions like breast cancer and lung cancer benefitted from dedicated funding during this time, melanoma researchers were in competition with over a dozen other cancer types to secure a portion of PRCRP funding. The recommendations of the 2021 Defense Appropriations bill will continue accelerate the pace of progress and ensure that melanoma research becomes a national priority for a third year.

“We commend the Senate Appropriations Committee for providing \$30 million for the Defense-funded Peer Reviewed Melanoma Research Program, increasing the size from the current appropriation by \$10 million. Melanoma is one of the most frequent diagnosed cancers among male and female service members, and those rates only increase in members age 50 and beyond.” said Kyleigh LiPira, MBA, Chief Executive Officer of the MRF.

MRA CEO, Michael Kaplan, shared similar enthusiasm, noting, *“not only is this a huge need for those that serve our country, but the benefits of research on melanoma can also pay dividends for so many other cancers.”* Kaplan continued, *“in fact, checkpoint immunotherapies first approved for melanoma in the last decade have since been approved as treatment options for many other cancers, demonstrating a ripple effect of melanoma research across oncology.”*

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About Melanoma

Melanoma is one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States and can strike men and women of all ages, races and skin types. In 2020, approximately 100,000 Americans are expected to be diagnosed

with Stage I-IV melanoma and another 96,000 will be diagnosed with melanoma in situ – totaling nearly 196,000 total diagnoses. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25- to 29-years-old and the second most common cancer in adolescents and young adults 15- to 29-years-old. The majority of melanomas occur on the skin and melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Melanoma can also occur in the eye (ocular, or uveal melanoma), in mucous membranes (mucosal melanoma), or even beneath fingernails or toenails (acral melanoma).

About the Melanoma Research Foundation

The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is the largest independent organization devoted to melanoma. Committed to the support of medical research in finding effective treatments and eventually a cure for melanoma, the MRF also educates patients and physicians about prevention, diagnosis and the treatment of melanoma. The MRF is a committed advocate for the melanoma community, helping to raise awareness of this disease and the need for a cure. The MRF's website (www.melanoma.org) is the premier source for melanoma information seekers. Find the MRF on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the Melanoma Research Alliance

MRA is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research and has awarded more than \$123 million and leveraged an additional \$319 million, to research seeking to better prevent, diagnose and treat melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, 100 percent of every dollar MRA raises goes directly to melanoma research. MRA's ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations and corporations. Visit www.CureMelanoma.org for more information, or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

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