

# Melanoma

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## Research Alliance

### CHAIR OF MRA'S SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PANEL CITED FOR PIONEERING IMMUNOTHERAPY TREATMENT OF MELANOMA AND OTHER CANCERS

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#### **MRA Lauds Recognition by Nature Magazine of Suzanne Topalian, MD, as "One of 10 That Mattered" in 2014**

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 13, 2015 --- The Melanoma Research Alliance proudly reports that Suzanne Topalian, M.D., chair of its Scientific Advisory Panel, and former Chief Scientific Officer, has been named by the prestigious Nature International Weekly Journal of Science as one of 10 people in science who mattered in 2014.

Dr. Topalian was cited for her pioneering work in cancer immunotherapy, which has resulted thus far in approval of three new drug therapies for treating melanoma patients, and with possible applications for other cancers.

"All of us at MRA who work with Suzanne are terrifically excited about her well-deserved recognition, and especially because we know the effort and determination that went into her research that is now yielding a hopeful means of combating and extending the life of patients with melanoma, one of the fastest growing cancers," said Wendy Selig, MRA CEO and President. "That immunotherapy at long last seems to be coming into its own, with possible application for other cancers, especially lung cancer, is testament to her commitment to a theory that is now widely accepted as a major cancer treatment breakthrough."

"We could not be more delighted for our board member Suzanne to receive this well-deserved honor. Suzanne is an extraordinary individual and professional, and it has been our good fortune to have her associated in a major role with MRA. She has our heartiest congratulations on this important recognition by Nature Magazine," said Debra Black, MRA founder and chair.

MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research, with every dollar raised earmarked for research into the disease's treatment and cure.

Nature wrote that Dr. Topalian as a clinician "always believed that cancer immunotherapy would work – and she was right." It noted that the drugs in question are "part of a hot new class called PD-1 inhibitors, which allow T cells in the immune system to jump into high gear so that they are free to attack tumors." The publication added that "some analysts predict that the drugs will become a cornerstone of cancer treatment."

Dr. Topalian is Professor of Surgery and Oncology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and Director, Melanoma Program, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center. She was MRA's first Chief Science Officer, a position she held until two years ago when she became head of the organization's Scientific Advisory Panel.

### **About 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 has dedicated more than \$60 million to research seeking to better prevent, diagnose, and treat melanoma, the most deadly type of skin cancer. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, 100% of every dollar MRA raises goes to support its melanoma research program. The organization is poised to build on recent momentum in the field, accelerating the pace of scientific discovery and translation in order to eliminate suffering and death due to melanoma. MRA's ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique multi-faceted collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations, and corporations. For more information, please visit [www.CureMelanoma.org](http://www.CureMelanoma.org).

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