



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STAND UP TO CANCER AND MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE ANNOUNCE
DREAM TEAM**

**Statement of Wendy K.D. Selig, President & CEO of the Melanoma Research
Alliance**

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) is delighted to be joining Stand Up to Cancer (SU2C), and its scientific partner, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), to fund an exciting and innovative Melanoma Dream Team Translational Cancer Research Grant. This multi-million dollar, three-year award is designed to accelerate the discovery and application of new therapeutic agents for patients suffering from metastatic melanoma.

The SU2C-MRA Melanoma Dream Team collaboration is the latest innovating and pioneering effort on the part of MRA to engage our fellow stakeholders in transforming the field of melanoma research. The Dream Team model, involving joint efforts among scientists and clinicians across disciplines and institutions, reflects the spirit of MRA's emphasis on collaboration in high- impact, translational research. The Melanoma Dream Team complements MRA's robust research portfolio which to date has awarded more than \$30 million in grants to 73 programs in 10 countries, primarily through a team research approach.

The Dream Team grant goes to an exceptional group of clinical and scientific cancer experts at some of the nation's leading medical research centers and hospitals. The team will investigate the application of personalized target/therapy identification in patients with BRAF wild type (BRAFWT) melanoma. This population of patients represents a significant unmet need in the field, as they make-up approximately one half of metastatic melanoma patients for whom one of the year's biggest breakthrough drugs – vemurafenib – is not effective because their melanomas lack the BRAF mutation that the drug is designed to target. In addition to bringing top notch expertise and skill to tackling this problem, the Dream Team Leaders, Drs. Jeffrey Trent (Translational Genomics Research Center) and Patricia LoRusso (Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute) have also assembled an impressive array of additional partners across sectors, to enhance and leverage the financial contributions that MRA and SU2C are making.

This initiative reflects MRA's leadership in a number of areas. The SU2C-MRA Dream Team is the first grant to be jointly selected and funded with SU2C. It also highlights the increasing leadership role for women in science. It is the first Dream Team to be led by a female Leader and the first to be selected with the guidance of a female review committee co-chair – MRA's Chief Science Officer, Dr. Suzanne Topalian (Johns Hopkins University).

The formation of the SU2C-MRA Melanoma Dream Team is an exciting additional approach to accelerate research aimed at realizing cures for this deadly skin cancer, which is the primary goal

behind the founding of MRA by Debra and Leon Black just over four years ago. We are thrilled to be partnering with SU2C and AACR in this important initiative. A copy of the joint announcement follows.

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About the Melanoma Research Alliance

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous support of Debra and Leon Black. It supports an international, cross-disciplinary group of biomedical researchers possessing clinical and scientific expertise to explore, identify and pursue innovative solutions to critical research questions, leading to better treatments and a cure for melanoma patients. Because of the support of its founders, all public donations to MRA go directly to research. MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research. For more information, visit www.curemelanoma.org or contact:

Anreder & Company
212-532-3232
Steven S. Anreder
steven.anreder@anreder.com
Cristina Bacon
cristina.bacon@anreder.com

Melanoma Research Alliance
202-336-8929
Ilyona Carter
icarter@curemelanoma.org