

Melanoma

Research Alliance

For Immediate Release

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Melanoma Research Alliance Applauds Advisory Panel Member Jim Allison for Nobel Prize in Medicine

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 1, 2018 – The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA), the largest non-profit funder of melanoma research worldwide, congratulated Dr. James P. Allison, of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas, for his award as one of two recipients of the 2018 Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology for his pioneering work in immunotherapy that has transformed the way melanoma and many other cancers are now treated.

Allison, who serves on MRA’s Scientific Advisory Panel, has received research support from MRA and served as a keynote speaker at MRA’s Seventh Annual Scientific Retreat. Dr. Tasuku Honjo of the University of Kyoto was jointly named as a recipient of this year’s Nobel Prize for his work on a different, but related immune brake called PD-1.

“We are absolutely thrilled to hear that Drs. Allison and Honjo were awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize in Medicine,” said MRA President & CEO Michael Kaplan. “Immune checkpoint blockade has transformed the way melanoma and many other cancers are treated, giving patients and their families better treatment options and renewed hope.”

Dr. Allison is credited with discovering how to “turn off” the brakes on the body’s immune system, enabling the body’s own immune system to fight cancer. This pioneering work laid the foundation for the development of the drug ipilimumab, also known as Yervoy®, among many other melanoma drugs, which blocks the activity of a molecule, called CTLA-4, which is a protein that prevents T cells from attacking normal body cells and cancer cells. Ipilimumab works to activate T cells so they can multiply and attack melanoma cells anywhere in the body. Immunotherapies have been significantly more effective in treating advanced melanoma than anything previously developed.

The contributions of these two researchers and many others, have resulted in monumental change for patients as a result of immunotherapy drugs first approved for melanoma now being used in more than 10 cancer types.

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About Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA)

Founded in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous support of Debra and Leon Black, the Melanoma Research Alliance exists to accelerate treatment options and find a cure for melanoma. As the largest nonprofit funder of melanoma research, it has dedicated over \$101 million and leveraged an additional \$101 million towards its mission. Through its support, MRA has championed revolutions in immunotherapy, targeted therapies, novel combinations and diagnostics. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, 100 percent of donations to MRA go directly to its melanoma research program. MRA's ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations, and corporations. Visit <http://www.CureMelanoma.org> for more information.