



**PROGRESS IN MELANOMA HIGHLIGHTED AT
2012 AACR ANNUAL MEETING**
*Melanoma Research Alliance Leaders, Awardees
Among Featured Speakers*

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 4, 2012— Wendy K.D. Selig, President & CEO, and Suzanne Topalian, MD, Chief Science Officer of the Melanoma Research Alliance, were among the speakers at this year's annual meeting of the [American Association for Cancer Research](#) (AACR), held March 31- April 4 in Chicago.

Dr. Topalian, Johns Hopkins University, delivered a featured lecture during a plenary session on "Immune Therapies, The Future is Now," exploring the progress being made in laboratories and clinic to develop immunotherapies for cancer patients, and highlighting opportunities to combine targeted and immune therapies. Her presentation focused on targeted blockade of immune checkpoints in cancer therapy, work that has been funded by the MRA and others.

Selig joined in a panel focused on funding for research through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), discussing how not-for-profit cancer research organizations, such as the MRA, are actively supporting cancer research and helping researchers leverage federal dollars. The panel session, entitled "The Outlook for Cancer Research Funding in Fiscal Year 2013 and Beyond," was designed to educate and engage the cancer research community in the effort to promote ongoing federal support for oncology research.

Since 2008, MRA, the largest private funder of melanoma research, has awarded more than \$33 million to 74 innovative research programs worldwide. A particular area of emphasis for MRA's research program is the development of new therapeutic approaches for metastatic melanoma, including those highlighted at the AACR meeting.

In addition to Topalian, 12 MRA-affiliated researchers spoke about their research at the AACR meeting, which was attended by more than 16,000 scientists from all over the world.

MRA is a co-sponsor, along with the AACR and Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C), of a Melanoma Dream Team, providing funding of \$6 million over a three-year period for a cancer research project aimed at accelerating the application of new therapeutic agents to clinical treatment. During a special news briefing, MRA Young Investigator and SU2C Innovative Research Grant recipient Roger Lo discussed his late-breaking research on drug resistance mechanisms to BRAF inhibitor therapy.