Melanoma > Exchange
Patient & Advocate Forum
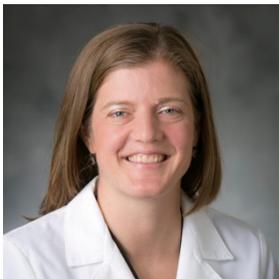
2026 SPEAKERS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY LAST NAME

JOSHUA ARBESMAN, MD– CLEVELAND CLINIC

Josh Arbesman, MD is a physician scientist who specializes in melanoma treatment and research. A dermatologist who treats individuals at high risk of developing melanoma, Dr. Arbesman studies skin cancer risk factors with the goal of helping his patients through all aspects of their care.

Dr. Arbesman is a leading expert in the field of genetic risk factors for melanoma. He has challenged the idea that melanoma is one of the least heritable cancer types by demonstrating that up to 15% of cases are associated with inherited pathogenic gene variants and has shown that many of these variants influence a tumor's response to immunotherapy. By studying genetic risk factors for melanoma, Dr. Arbesman hopes his team will be able to identify new areas of skin cancer prevention beyond reducing sun exposure, expanding the options available for at-risk individuals.

GEORGIA BEASLEY, MD, MHSC – DUKE HEALTH

Dr. Beasley is an associate professor of surgery in the division of Surgical Oncology at Duke University with a secondary appointment as associate professor in the department of medicine. After playing 3 years in the women's NBA, she began medical school. She obtained her MD (2008) and Masters of Health Science in clinical research (2010) from Duke University School of Medicine. She then completed general surgical residency at Duke University in 2015, during which time she was awarded a traineeship under a long-standing Surgical Oncology T32 grant. She then completed a fellowship in complex surgical oncology at the Ohio State University in 2017. She returned to Duke in 2017 as a faculty member. In 2019, she became co-director of the Duke Melanoma Program.

Dr. Beasley is a surgeon scientist with active involvement in clinical and translational research. Her main clinical and research interests include immunologic aspects of melanoma including oncolytic viral therapy. She is principal investigator of over 10 therapeutic clinical trials in melanoma including novel intratumoral therapies. Her research focuses on the role of innate immunity in the anti-tumor response. She has authored over 100 publications centered on melanoma. She has received multiple internal and external funding including the Society of Surgical Oncology's Young Investigator Award, NIH K08 mentored physician scientist award, and Melanoma Research Alliance Grant. Most recently she was selected to Duke Medical School's Alpha Omega Alpha and received the American Society for Clinical Investigation Young Physician-Scientist Award.

CHRIS CARR – MELANOMA PATIENT ADVOCATE

Christopher Carr is a Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary educator, consultant, and cultural organizer whose work bridges pedagogy, environmental justice, and creative production. As founder of Brooklyn Wildlife and co-founder of Black Land Ownership, he has built platforms that integrate arts programming, land stewardship, and community development across New York, Washington, D.C., and beyond.

Carr has designed student-centered curricula within public schools, supervised youth workforce programs in maker and technology labs, and delivered professional development on equity, compliance, and institutional culture transformation. His presentations at national convenings—including the RCP Gathering at UMass Amherst, Smart Growth Equity Summit, SXSW, and the COSBAC Conference—reflect a sustained engagement with interdisciplinary education, conservation policy, and technological inclusion. A graduate of Morehouse College with additional study at Columbia University, Carr's work advances long-term, community-rooted strategies for equitable participation in education, environmental stewardship, and emerging technologies.

CHARLOTTE CLEMENT DE BONA– MELANOMA PATIENT ADVOCATE

Charlotte Clement brings prowess based on her education at Harvard Business School, along with degrees from Vanderbilt University and The London School of Economics and Political Science, and a successful career in consulting. But most importantly, her experience as a caretaker to her father, decorated American Thoroughbred horse trainer Christophe Clement, as he battled metastatic uveal melanoma is what brings her to MRA. Sadly, Charlotte's father passed away in 2025. She has dedicated herself full-time to finding hope and better treatments for others, honoring her father's legacy through advocacy. Now, Charlotte is at the center of MRA's dynamic Uveal Task Force, a new patient-powered initiative, bringing business principles and structure to the scientific community. The group including patients, caregivers, scientists, clinicians, and advocates are all working to accelerate research and collaboration in this overlooked field.

BRANDI CORBELLO – MELANOMA PATIENT ADVOCATE

In 2019, after being diagnosed with Stage 3 melanoma, Brandi Corbello transformed a life-altering challenge into a purposeful mission. Following immunotherapy treatment, she became deeply committed to understanding skincare ingredients and the importance of daily sun protection – realizing that many products on the market lacked both accessibility and clean, skin-conscious formulations.

As the Founder of her own sunscreen brand *Melan*, Brandi is dedicated to creating healthier, more affordable sunscreen and skincare products without compromising on quality. Her work is rooted in education, prevention, and advocacy, with a commitment to advancing melanoma research.

COLLIN COSTELLO – MAYO CLINIC

Collin Costello, M.D., is a board-certified dermatologist specializing in melanoma, cutaneous oncology, and supportive dermato-oncology. Dr. Costello leads the Mayo Clinic Melanoma and Advanced Cutaneous Imaging Clinic and the Supportive Dermato-Oncology Clinic in Scottsdale. Dr. Costello is actively engaged in cutaneous oncology research, focusing on using artificial intelligence to improve the detection of high-risk melanoma populations. In addition, he is involved in multiple medical societies, resident education, medical education, and mentoring trainees interested in dermatology research.

Dr. Costello engages in improving melanoma research through teledermatology/imaging technology, melanoma prevention in Latino populations, the pathogenesis of acral melanoma, dermoscopy of acral nevi and melanoma, and the molecular staging of high-risk cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma.

Dr. Costello focuses on technology, such as dermoscopy confocal microscopy, whole slide imaging, total-body photography, genomics and artificial intelligence, to transform melanoma and cutaneous oncology healthcare delivery. Dr. Costello closes the inequity gaps in melanoma and cutaneous oncology care. His lab decentralizes research trials within diagnostic imaging to improve care and minority access to this research.

JIM DARWIN – MELANOMA PATIENT ADVOCATE

Jim Darwin is the founder and president of Skin Cancer Awareness for Golfers. He shares a lifelong passion for the game of golf where he competed as a junior golfer. In 2022, he was diagnosed with metastatic malignant melanoma stage 3B and underwent surgery at UT Medical Center and treatment at MD Anderson. Learning that golfers are the number one group who get skin cancer, he created Skin Cancer Awareness for Golfers, a 501C3.

He currently serves as the Director of Operations at the Office of the Attorney General. Prior to that, he ran veteran programs for the State of Texas for more than 20 years.

His servant leadership began when he enlisted in the US Marine Corps. After college, Jim was commissioned a second lieutenant and served in Marine Reconnaissance units on active duty and in the reserves. He is a veteran of Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

He is a Life Member of the Disabled American Veterans, VFW and American Legion. He serves on the Executive Council of the ESPN-Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl, Member of the Fort Worth Air Power Council, Board Member of the Air Power Foundation and past Chairman of the Austin Veterans Day Parade Foundation.

MICHAEL DAVIES, MD, PHD – MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER

Dr. Michael Davies is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, with joint appointments in the Departments of Translational Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine, and he is the Anne and John Mendelsohn Chair for Cancer Research. Dr. Davies is an elected member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) and he is the President of the Society for Melanoma Research.

Dr. Davies is a physician-scientist whose research utilizes integrated approaches to study the regulation and clinical significance of oncogenic signaling networks in cancer, particularly in therapeutic resistance and metastatic progression. He has been the principal investigator of both individual and team science peer-reviewed grants from multiple organizations, and he has authored or co-authored >250 original research manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals.

DANA DEIGHTON – MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Dana Deighton is MRA's Director of Communications and Engagement. In her role, Dana oversees all aspects of MRA's integrated communications and engagement strategies and programming. She leads communication strategies across multiple channels, donor audiences, the scientific and patient community, and corporate partners to elevate and enhance MRA's public profile.

Dana is an accomplished communications leader with over 25 years of experience in corporate marketing and communications, publishing, partner/project/program management, and patient advocacy. She began her distinguished career at National Geographic, where she led complex strategic initiatives, brand marketing campaigns, and global partnerships.

Dana made a significant pivot into the health space following her own medical journey. Her commitment to healthcare innovation is evident in her most recent role as Associate Director of Outreach & Strategic Partnerships at Scripps Research Institute, where she led recruitment and engagement activities for the National Institute of Health's All of Us campaign.

Before her tenure at Scripps, Dana spent three years at Inspire, a leading social network for health, where she managed strategic enterprise initiatives and cultivated partnerships with clients, advocacy groups, investors, and vendors.

Dana is also deeply involved in the cancer advocacy space, mentoring other patients and co-chairing the Patient and Family Advisory Council for the University of Maryland Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center and participates in steering committees, task forces, and guidelines review panels for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). She also served for nearly a decade as an Executive Board Member of the Esophageal Cancer Action Network (ECAN.org).

STEPHANIE KAUFFMAN – MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Stephanie Kauffman is President and Chief Operating Officer of the Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA), the world's largest private nonprofit funder of melanoma research. She oversees enterprise strategy, partnerships, operations, communications, and development driving MRA's mission to accelerate prevention, early detection, and life-saving treatments for the deadliest form of skin cancer.
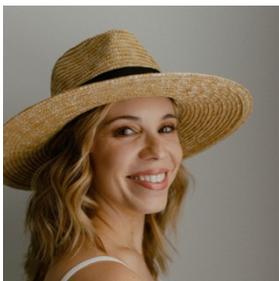
A recognized leader at the intersection of storytelling, science, and capital mobilization, Stephanie has spent her career building platforms that translate innovation into impact. At MRA, she works closely with researchers, investors, corporate partners, and patient advocates to fund bold, high-risk research and to expand melanoma science globally.

Before joining MRA, Stephanie held senior leadership roles at leading health and medical research organizations. She most recently served as Head of Strategic Partnerships at Americares, where she helped mobilize hundreds of millions of dollars in support of disaster response, pandemic relief and medicine security worldwide.

Previously, Stephanie was Chief Communications and Partnerships Officer at the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF), the largest private funder of breast cancer research. There, she led global communications and partnership strategies across media, digital, corporate, and affiliate platforms, helping generate more than $100 million in corporate support to advance breast cancer research.

Earlier in her career, Stephanie spent over a decade in the entertainment industry as Senior Vice President of Global Alliances at Universal Pictures. She helped build multi-billion-dollar franchises and brand partnerships across Universal's film, home entertainment and theme parks, including the global expansion of the Fast & Furious franchise and the transformation of Despicable Me's Minions into a billion-dollar consumer products phenomenon.

Stephanie has proudly served on the boards of the International Women's Media Foundation, National Council for Skin Cancer Prevention, Public Access to Safe Sunscreen Coalition, and is actively involved in women's leadership initiatives. She holds a B.S. in Marketing Management from Florida Southern College.

LEAH KOSKINEN – MELANOMA PATIENT ADVOCATE

Leah Koskinen is a melanoma survivor, mom and patient advocate focused on prevention, early detection and education for children, teens and their parents. Since her diagnosis (almost 8 years ago), she has worked to raise awareness through community outreach, public speaking and partnerships with multiple organizations, emphasizing the importance of sun safety starting at a young age. Leah brings a unique perspective of blending experience as a young patient and parent, advocating for care and education that protects the next generation.

JOAN LEVY, PHD – MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Joan Levy, PhD, serves as the Chief Science Officer for the Melanoma Research Alliance. In this role she works with MRA's scientific team and leadership to set the scientific vision for the organization, and oversees all aspects of MRA's Research Program – including grants, the RARE Registry, and special projects. Joan has more than 30 years of experience in oncology research in academic, pharmaceutical, and disease foundation settings.

Prior to joining MRA, Joan was Director of Research at the Chordoma Foundation and provided oversight of research activities, in particular focusing on programs involving identification of new therapeutic targets, further development of the Foundation's Drug Screening Program, and advancement of new drugs and combination approaches into the clinic. For ten years Joan also led a variety of research programs at the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation ranging from spearheading different grant programs to working closely with their affiliate consortium on large genomics projects, registries and coordinating early clinical trials between consortium sites and industry partners. Before her work at the different oncology foundations, Joan coordinated an oncology pipeline of early drug discovery projects at Bayer Pharmaceuticals.

Joan received her BS in Biology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and earned a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Vermont College of Medicine. She completed two postdoctoral fellowships in oncology research focusing on oncogenes and signal transduction pathways at the Rockefeller University and at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

YANA NAJJAR, MD – UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MEDICAL CENTER

Yana G. Najjar, MD is a translational investigator and cutaneous oncologist at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, where she also is an associate professor of medicine and Director of the Clinical and Translational Research Center.

Dr. Najjar specializes in early phase clinical trials and in the treatment of advanced melanoma. Her research focusing on immunotherapy resistant melanoma and rare melanoma subtypes. She has developed multiple investigator-initiated trials that aim to remodel melanoma tumor cell metabolism and hypoxia in the tumor microenvironment to overcome mechanisms of resistance to immunotherapy. Her lab is focused on various correlative analyses from investigator-initiated trials. Dr. Najjar's research is funded by the NIH, the Department of Defense, and the Melanoma Research Alliance.

RENEE ORCIONE – MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Renee Orcione proudly serves as the Associate Director of Communications and Engagement at MRA after joining the team as Development Associate in February 2020, followed by a promotion to Digital Engagement & Communications Manager in September 2022. In her current role as Associate Director, Renee leads in the creation, execution, and optimization of content and campaigns to advance MRA's mission and vision through digital channels. She also works closely with the melanoma advocate community to share their stories and ensure MRA is providing the most up to date information and resources.

Renee graduated with a BA in Public Communications and Spanish from American University's School of Communication in 2016. While in college, she discovered her passion for non-profit work while interning with the Colorectal Cancer Alliance and was involved with several other mission-based organizations, including Run Hope Work and City Dogs Rescue & City Kitties. Renee joined MRA after spending two years at Child Care Aware of America, a nonprofit focused on advancing quality child care for all families.

Outside of the office, Renee enjoys traveling with friends, visiting her family in Massachusetts, and spending time with her dog Linus, who she adopted through City Dogs Rescue. Renee currently resides in San Antonio, TX, with her husband whose former military career brought them to the area.

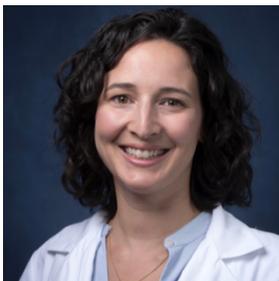**PATRICIA POSSIK, PHD** – SANGER INSTITUTE AND BRAZILIAN NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

Dr. Patricia Abrão Possik is an International Fellow at the Sanger Institute and Group Leader at the Brazilian National Cancer Institute in Rio de Janeiro. Dr. Possik leads a research group at the Brazilian National Cancer Institute (INCA) in Rio de Janeiro focused on the cellular and molecular biology of tumours. The main focus of her group is on Acral Lentiginous Melanoma (ALM), an understudied subtype of skin cancer that is a significant health problem in Brazil and other Latin American countries. The establishment of a strong collaboration with scientists, medical pathologists and clinicians at the Brazilian National Cancer Institute and abroad has enabled the collection of samples from Brazilian patients, which are being characterized genetically and used to generate experimental models aimed at understanding the biology of the disease and identifying therapeutic targets.

Dr. Possik received a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the Federal University of São Carlos, followed by a Master's in Genetics and Evolution. She earned her PhD from the Antônio Prudente Foundation with work performed at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research in São Paulo and at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia, followed by postdoc training at the Netherlands Cancer Institute in Amsterdam.

VERONICA ROTEMBERG, MD, PHD – MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER CENTER

Veronica Rotemberg, MD, PhD is the Director of Imaging Informatics in the Dermatology Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She received her MD from Duke University and PhD from Duke's Department of Biomedical Engineering. She then trained in Dermatology at Columbia University Medical Center. Her lab studies validation and development of artificial intelligence models applied to dermatology, especially melanoma detection. She also sees patients who are at high risk for skin cancer.

MEGAN SCHOLLENBERGER, MSN, CRNP – JHU SIDNEY KIMMEL COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

Megan D. Schollenberger is a Senior Nurse Practitioner in medical oncology at Johns Hopkins who focuses on cutaneous malignancies. She earned her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in nursing from the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. She has over a decade of patient care experience, including as an inpatient leukemia nurse, an outpatient primary care nurse practitioner, and in her current role at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins.

Ms. Schollenberger's primary clinical interest is in the holistic treatment of patients with advanced skin cancers, including melanoma and basal, cutaneous squamous, and Merkel cell carcinomas. As part of the multidisciplinary Melanoma Program at Johns Hopkins, she conducts regular clinical practices in Baltimore, MD and at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Schollenberger is a co-investigator on multiple clinical trials testing novel immunomodulatory therapies for patients with cutaneous malignancies. She is a co-author on multiple abstracts and publications, including those describing the efficacy of front-line anti-PD-1 in patients with advanced basal cell carcinoma (Schenk et al., ESMO 2022), outcomes after administration of immune checkpoint inhibitors in kidney transplant recipients (Schenk et al., ASCO 2022), and novel approaches to treating patients with anti-PD-1-refractory Merkel cell carcinoma (LoPiccolo et al., JITC 2019).

KEITH TOLLEY – MELANOMA PATIENT ADVOCATE

Keith Tolley is a dedicated melanoma patient advocate, mentor, and community leader committed to supporting individuals and families navigating a cancer diagnosis. Through his own Stage IV melanoma journey, Keith's experience fuels his passionate advocacy.
Keith serves as a patient mentor, advocate, and representative with organizations including MRA, Imerman's Angels, Massachusetts General

Hospital, and other advocacy organizations. He has participated in several grant review panels, represented the patient community to pharma and biopharma companies, and has been involved in providing a patient voice into multiple SITC panels. He is also a longtime Community Leader for MRA's Melanoma > Exchange, a free online melanoma treatment and research-focused discussion and support community.

When not advocating for or mentoring cancer patients, Keith is most likely hanging out with one of his 18 amazing grandchildren.