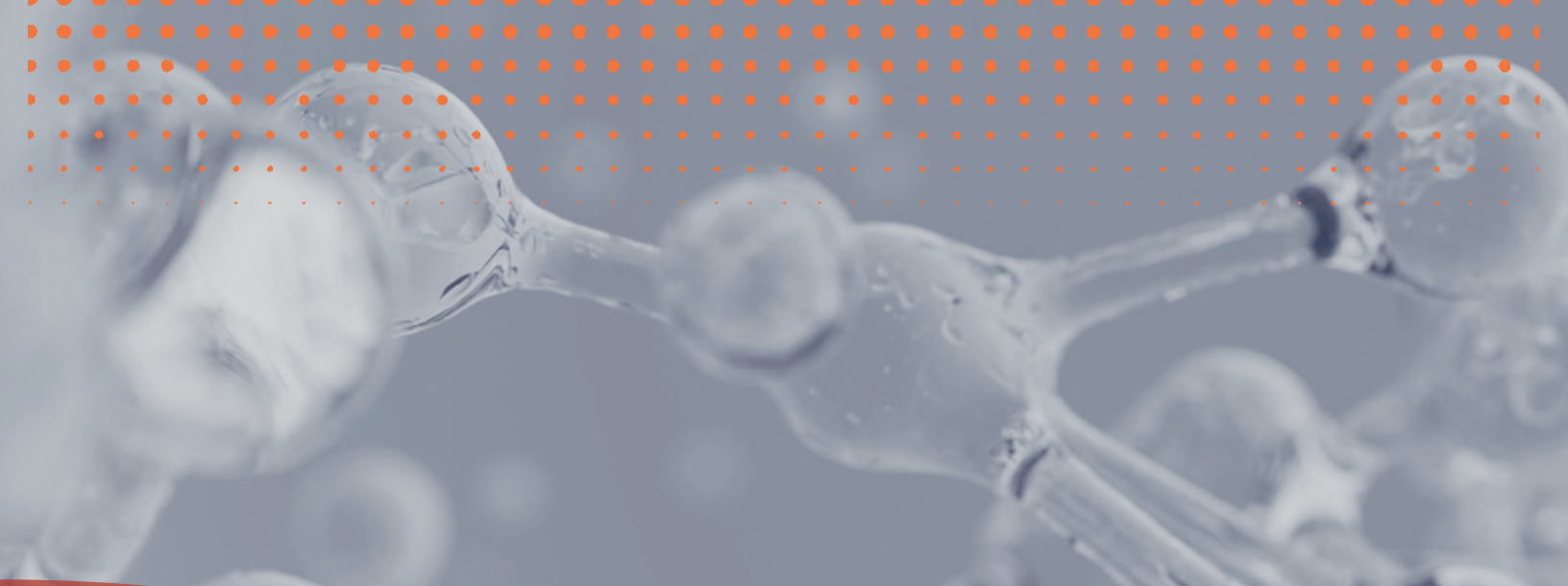

MOMENTUM
FOR A CURE

MRA Scientific Retreat
February 25-27, 2026

Accelerating Science. Uniting Voices. Saving Lives.

Melanoma Research Alliance

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Every year, the Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) looks forward to convening the melanoma community at our Annual Scientific Retreat – an opportunity to connect, collaborate, and advance progress together. The 2026 Scientific Retreat, held February 25-27 in Washington, D.C., brought together over 250 participants from across the United States and around the world, including Australia, Brazil, Germany, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Across three days, attendees engaged in thoughtful scientific dialogue spanning the melanoma continuum. Sessions explored emerging discoveries in genetics and genomics, advances in translational and clinical research, novel therapeutic strategies, the rare melanoma subtypes, and much more. The breadth of perspectives represented reflected the collaborative spirit that drives progress forward.

Beyond the formal sessions, the Retreat created space for meaningful discourse, sharing, and connection. The Poster Session, breakout workshops, networking roundtables, and informal conversations throughout the meeting fostered opportunities to exchange ideas, spark collaborations, and strengthen relationships across disciplines.

The conversations and connections formed during the Scientific Retreat extend far beyond a few days in Washington, D.C. Year after year, collaborations launched at this meeting grow into new ideas, partnerships, and scientific advances that move the field forward.

To everyone who joined us – academic researchers, clinicians, industry, biotech, and government representatives, patient advocates, partners, and advisors – thank you. Your participation, insights, and shared commitment continue to make the Scientific Retreat one of the most meaningful gatherings in melanoma research.

Together, we are keeping up the momentum and accelerating progress towards a brighter future for melanoma patients everywhere.

With gratitude,

Joan Levy

Joan Levy, PhD
Cheif Science Officer

Sara DiNapoli

Sara DiNapoli, PhD
Director, Scientific Programs

Jessica Scales

Jessica Scales, PhD
Associate Director,
Rare Melanoma Research

BY THE NUMBERS

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) is solely dedicated to funding and advancing the most innovative and promising melanoma research.

Our mission is clear and guides us every day:

MRA is dedicated to end suffering and death due to melanoma by collaborating with all stakeholders to accelerate powerful research, advance cures for all patients, and prevent more melanomas.

Platinum Transparency 2026 Candid.

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR

Highest Rated Melanoma Charity in the U.S.

100% OF DONATIONS TO MRA SUPPORT MELANOMA RESEARCH

Melanoma Research in Action

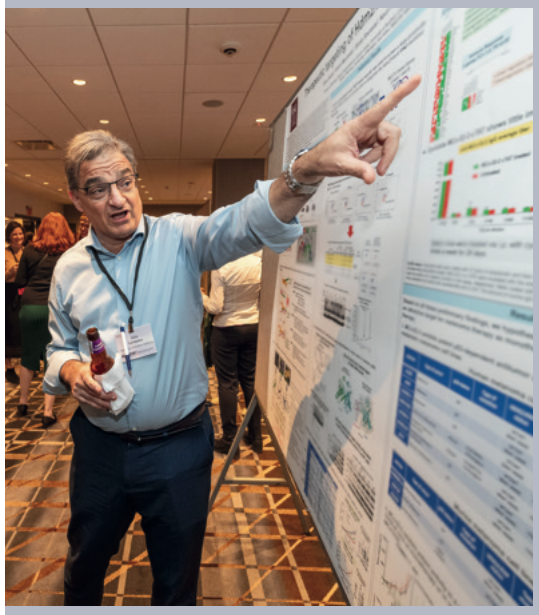
Advancing Discoveries, Changing Lives, Curing Melanoma

MRA supported research... at **188** institutions & in **20** countries

225+
unique therapeutic approaches studied

61
clinical trials supported

19
approved therapeutics



$200+
million in grants

$500+
million in leveraged and follow-on funding

565+
research projects supported

500+
funded investigators

2026 RETREAT AGENDA

Wednesday, February 25

SPONSOR TOAST/RECEPTION **5:30–6:00PM**

OPENING RECEPTION **6:00–7:30PM**

Thursday, February 26

GENERAL BREAKFAST **7:00–8:45AM**

OPENING REMARKS DAY 1 **9:00–9:20AM**
Marc Hurlbert, MRA CEO
Kelly Ashton, MRA Board, Chair MRA Uveal Melanoma Task Force
Taryn Brady, The Wayne Stinchcomb Big Orange Melanoma Foundation
Joan Levy, MRA CSO

KEYNOTE LECTURE 1: CATHERINE WU **9:20–9:50AM**
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Personalized Cancer Vaccines: Encouraging results and new frontiers in cancer antigen discovery

SCIENTIFIC SESSION 1: MELANOMA-IMMUNE METABOLISM **9:55–11:45AM**
Chair: Taha Merghoub, Weill Cornell Medical College

TIM BULLOCK, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA **9:55–10:15 AM**
Fuel for function: Elucidating the metabolic constraints on CD8+ tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte function in melanoma

APARNA KESARWALA, EMORY UNIVERSITY **10:15–10:30AM**
Targeting interactions between melanoma metabolism and radiation therapy

BREAK **10:30–10:50AM**

PING-CHIH HO, UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE **10:50–11:10 AM**
Mitochondrial guidance for T cell exhaustion

RACHEL PERRY, YALE UNIVERSITY **11:10–11:25 AM**
Targeting fatty acid and glucose metabolism in melanoma

BIN ZHANG, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY **11:25–11:45AM**
Sustaining antitumor response of CD8+ T cells by distinct metabolic orchestration

AMIE BUNKER, CDMRP MELANOMA RESEARCH PROGRAM **11:45–11:55AM**
Updates on the CDRMP Melanoma Research Program

NETWORKING LUNCH AND GENERAL ROUNDTABLES **12:00–1:30PM**

Biomarkers - 'liquid biopsy' ctDNA, and tumor biomarkers	Microbiome
Brain metastasis, leptomeningeal disease, in-transit disease, and tumor dormancy	Neoadjuvant and adjuvant therapy
Cell based therapy (CAR-T, NK cells, TILs)	Targets & drug discovery for new treatments
Diversity - Women & Underrepresented groups in melanoma research & care	Tumor microenvironment
Early Detection & Diagnosis (AI, imaging, machine learning)	Uveal melanoma
Genomics - Role of genetics, genomics & epigenetics; single cell technologies	Vaccines and intralesional therapies
In-transit melanoma	MRA Young Investigator Awardees
irAE - understanding immune-related adverse events	

SCIENTIFIC SESSION 2: IMMUNOTHERAPY EFFICACY AND TOXICITY **1:40–3:10PM**
Chair: Toni Ribas, University of California, Los Angeles

CHRISTIAN ULRICH BLANK, THE NETHERLANDS CANCER INSTITUTE **1:40–2:05PM**
Overcoming upfront resistance to neoadjuvant CTLA-4 plus PD-1 blockade

JUN WANG, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY **2:05–2:20PM**
LAG-3 receptor-ligand biology and targeted next-generation immunotherapies

AARON NEWMAN, STANFORD UNIVERSITY **2:20–2:45PM**
Noninvasive prediction of severe toxicity from immune checkpoint blockade



2026 RETREAT AGENDA

NIROSHANA ANANDASABAPATHY, WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE — **2:45–3:10PM**
PD-1 positions CD8+ memory T cells in skin irAE sites via TGFb dependent engraftment

BREAK — **3:10–3:30PM**

SCIENTIFIC SESSION 3: EARLY-STAGE INVESTIGATORS — **3:30–4:15PM**
Chair: Ana Anderson, Harvard Medical School

AMAYA VIRÓS, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER — **3:30–3:45PM**
Stromal lipids and melanoma metastasis

MITCHELL FANE, FOX CHASE CANCER CENTER — **3:45–4:00PM**
The role of aging in immune-mediated reactivation from metastatic melanoma dormancy

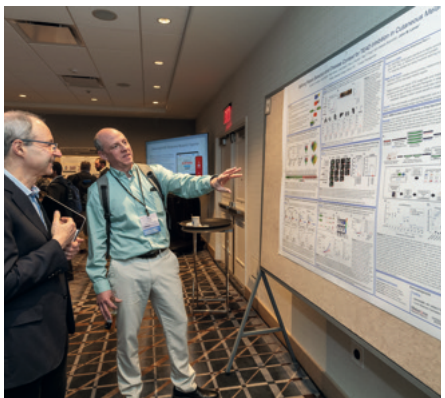
BERTA LOPEZ SÁNCHEZ-LAORDEN, MIGUEZ HERNANDEZ UNIVERSITY — **4:00–4:15PM**
Microglial reprogramming enhances antitumor immunity and immunotherapy response in melanoma brain metastases

SCIENTIFIC SESSION 4: PANEL DISCUSSION ON RARE MELANOMAS — **4:15–5:10PM**
Moderator: Charlotte Ariyan, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Panelists: Elizabeth Buchbinder, Massachusetts General Hospital
Richard Carvajal, Northwell Health
J. William Harbour, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Keiran Smalley, Moffitt Cancer Center

CONCLUDING REMARKS — **5:10–5:15PM**

POSTER SESSION AND RECEPTION — **5:20–6:20PM**

DINNER — **7:00–10:00PM**
Carmine's Italian Restaurant


2026 RETREAT AGENDA

Friday, February 27

GENERAL BREAKFAST **7:00–8:50AM**

OPENING REMARKS DAY 2 **9:00–9:05AM**
Sara DiNapoli, MRA Director, Scientific Programs

KEYNOTE LECTURE 2: RICHARD WHITE **9:05–9:35AM**
University of Oxford
The next wave of melanoma models

SCIENTIFIC SESSION 5: GENETICS AND GENOMICS **9:40–11:30AM**
Chair: C. Daniela Robles-Espinoza,
National Autonomous University of Mexico

SAMRA TURAJLIC, THE FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE **9:40–10:05AM**
Investigating melanoma metastases

HENSIN TSAO, MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL **10:05–10:25AM**
A novel genetically engineered allograft model (GEAM)
of Kit-activated melanomas

BREAK **10:25–10:45AM**

NORA ENGEL, CORIELL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH **10:45–11:05AM**
The X and Y of sex disparities in cancer: the role of sex chromosomes and gonadal hormones in melanoma progression

TOMAS KIRCHHOFF, NYU **11:05–11:30 AM**
Novel genetic predictor in personalized treatment selection of anti-PD1 therapies in metastatic melanoma: results from IO-GEM consortium

CLOSING PANEL: PERSONALIZED TREATMENT APPROACHES FOR MELANOMA **11:35AM–12:30PM**
Moderator: Michael Davies, MD Anderson Cancer Center
Panelists: Charlotte Ariyan, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Christian Blank, The Netherlands Cancer Institute
Harriet Kluger, Yale University
Craig Slingluff, University of Virginia
Hussein Tawbi, MD Anderson Cancer Center

CONCLUDING REMARKS **12:30–12:35PM**

2026 PARTICIPANT LIST

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US AT THE 2026 MRA SCIENTIFIC RETREAT!

Over 250 attendees joined us from around the United States as well as Australia, Brazil, Germany, Israel, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

For a full list of participants, please scan:

THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 SPONSORS!

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2026 SCIENTIFIC RETREAT EVALUATION REPORT

The MRA Annual Scientific Retreat took place in Washington DC on February 25 – 27, 2026 and included 251 attendees. 7% of event participants joined from outside the United States (Australia, Brazil, Germany, Israel, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom).

Post-retreat evaluation surveys were distributed online using Survey Monkey and completed by 68 individuals. While respondents had the option for anonymity, 41% provided their name.

"The MRA Scientific Retreat is great. It's always a pleasure to come and see how motivated the melanoma community is."

– 2026 Evaluation Comment

	Registrants % (n)	Respondents % (n)
Academic Researcher	69% (174)	81% (55)
Industry/Pharma Representative	17.5% (44)	9% (6)
Patient or Patient Advocate	4.5% (11)	7% (5)
Non-profit / Foundation Representative	3% (7)	0% (0)
Federal Government Employee	2.5% (6)	3% (2)
Other	3.5% (9)	0% (0)

Respondents were asked to rate their overall experience at the 2026 Retreat, with 1 star being unsatisfactory and 5 stars being outstanding:

★ 4.8/5
Average Rating

Respondents were asked to rate aspects of the MRA Retreat on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (outstanding), with the following responses received:

	OUTSTANDING		GOOD / FAIR		UNSATIS FACTORY	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Registration Process	90.48% 57	4.76% 3	1.59% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.17% 2	63	4.92
Opening Reception	38.10% 24	26.98 % 17	7.94% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.98% 17	63	4.41
Scientific Sessions	76.19% 48	17.46 % 11	4.76% 3	1.59% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	63	4.68
Networking Roundtables	49.21% 31	23.81 % 15	6.35% 4	0.00% 0	1.59% 1	19.05% 12	63	4.47
Poster Session	50.79% 32	17.46 % 11	11.11% 7	0.00% 0	1.59% 1	19.05% 12	63	4.43
Meeting Facilities	61.90% 39	22.22 % 14	11.11% 7	1.59% 1	0.00% 0	3.17% 2	63	4.49

One in five respondents indicated the opportunities for both formal and informal networking as what they liked most about the Retreat, with individual comments such as:

- ✓ I really liked getting to know the community. It's very special to have clinicians, researchers, and patient advocates in the room together to discuss recent scientific advances.
- ✓ Very good community, single-track conference, and very easy to meet other people in the field.
- ✓ I really enjoyed re-connecting with colleagues who I first met at last year's Scientific Retreat (and have since started to collaborate/publish together) and also meet new colleagues and discuss how projects are moving forward and new ideas.
- ✓ The Thursday night dinner is great – we are able to sit down and discuss/debate topics and build deeper connections. It's a fantastic meeting, and well organized.
- ✓ The best part of the Retreat is the ability to renew old connections and make new ones.

"The Scientific Retreat is an excellent opportunity for direct interactions with colleagues, advocates, and industry."

- 2026 Retreat Participant

Nearly half of respondents indicated the caliber of scientific content presented and speaker lineup as what they liked most about the Retreat, with individual comments such as:

- ✓ I most enjoyed the variety of scientists from all areas that attend this event.
- ✓ This year had a great mix of clinical and translational scientists.
- ✓ Hearing about the latest and greatest emerging science in the melanoma field, even before it is published - exciting!
- ✓ I most enjoyed the energy of the event and the quality of the science.
- ✓ I thought that the science presented this year was cutting-edge and innovative. I appreciated both the focus areas of the sessions as well as the mix of presentations, including some shorter young investigator presentations Thursday afternoon.
- ✓ As usual, the mix of basic and translational scientists, clinicians, surgeons and patients just makes for a very unique experience, and there is a real sense of community that I have never seen anywhere else.

Other highlights for 2026 Scientific Retreat attendees included the Keynote Presentations, the Poster Session, and Breakout Workshops.

"I greatly appreciate how the MRA Scientific Retreat provides opportunities to gain insight from patients and advocates, and blends both clinical and basic science advances."

- 2026 Retreat Participant

Additional cross-cutting feedback on elements most favored by participants included the following:

- ✓ I appreciate the high impact science and plenty of time for networking and discussion. The panel discussions are also extremely educational and idea building.
- ✓ The panel discussions are always the most interesting. However, the informal hallway and break discussions with KOLs and advocates are always the most valuable for me.
- ✓ I loved that patient advocates had a direct link to the top research specialists in the melanoma field.
- ✓ I really valued the unpublished data and attention to unmet needs and future directions discussed at this year's event.

"My favorite scientific meeting all year! Thank you for all you are doing to advance the field and support our community."

- 2026 Retreat Participant

Respondents were asked what MRA should do differently or better for 2027. Responses have been grouped below by thematic domain:

Science Lectures/Panels/Topics:

- ✓ A continued focus on rare melanomas would be something I'd like to keep seeing.
- ✓ More scientific diversity, especially knowing that current therapeutics are plateauing. Next generation therapeutic approaches should be emphasized. Small molecule, combinatorial therapies, new regimens.
- ✓ I think early stage/diagnosis could be covered more at a future retreat - nevogenesis and melanomagenesis. We have a likely problem of overdiagnosis, trials of systemic immunotherapy with high-risk primary melanoma (not metastatic disease) and also people are wanting to train AI algorithms in various fields, so the ground-truth with diagnosis needs to be as good as possible.
- ✓ AI in melanoma diagnosis, prognosis, treatment decisions; melanoma among special populations (minorities, Veterans, others), disparities and how to address them; alternative relevant models for melanoma (given NIH stated desire to move away from animal models).
- ✓ More fundamental biology and what we can learn from other tumor indications + early detection + dormancy.

Formal/Informal Networking:

- ✓ Humbly suggest focused discussions or moderated discussions for the lunch networking roundtables. For the last few years, I have attended topics with full tables, yet we didn't spend much time discussing the topic.
- ✓ Some of the evening networking events are overlapping with dinners so some of the experts are not available for the networking events.

Overall Retreat Format & Meeting Space:

- ✓ The little black bags at registration were not useful. Save the money or go back to the reusable bags.
- ✓ Bring back the Young Investigators Breakfast with programming that includes discussions with journal editors, mentorship strategies, or brainstorming about big questions in the field.
- ✓ It is not easy to keep speakers on time, but some sessions went pretty far over.