

Novartis announces funding for patient advocacy initiatives to support and empower metastatic breast cancer community

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- - STEP (Solutions to Empower Patients)[™] Program helps nonprofit organizations deliver innovative solutions to patient communities
- - Funded programs aim to improve the experience of people living with metastatic breast cancer
- - Recipients include Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE), METAvivor Research and Support, and Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF)

EAST HANOVER, N.J., June 27, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Novartis today announced support for three US-based patient advocacy groups provided through the STEP (Solutions to Empower Patients)[™] Program. The STEP Program is an initiative that invites nonprofit organizations to submit proposals that demonstrate innovation in health education, empowerment, and support to help address significant unmet patient needs. Three organizations, Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE), METAvivor Research and Support, and Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF), will receive funding for programs that will address the challenges the metastatic breast cancer (MBC) community faces in understanding and making decisions about MBC care.

"We are pleased to support these organizations and their impressive programs that will enhance the lives of those living with MBC," said Ameet Mallik, Executive Vice President and Head, US, Novartis Oncology.

"Novartis created the STEP Program to improve people's lives beyond medicine through organizations that play a critical role in empowering patient communities."

Approximately 155,000 people in the United States are living with MBC, a form of cancer that has spread from the breast to other parts of the body, such as the brain, bones, or liver.¹ At this stage, the disease is incurable and life expectancy drops dramatically.¹ An MBC diagnosis can be overwhelming, and people living with the disease face multiple, unique challenges in navigating care and accessing social support.

The innovative programs that will receive funding are:

- XRAY: MBC (eXamining the Relevance of Articles for You: Metastatic Breast Cancer), submitted by Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE) – this program will provide patients and their caregivers with a trusted source to help interpret media coverage on MBC research, understand the relevance of the research for their clinical care, and provide tools to discuss this information with their health care providers to help with their medical decision-making process.
- MBC PREP (Metastatic Breast Cancer Patient Resource and Education Portal), submitted by METAvivor Research and Support – this online patient navigation portal will enable patients to easily access information specific to their MBC diagnoses to make personalized and informed choices about their health.
- Financial Resource Directory for Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients, submitted by Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF) – this online tool will deliver needed information about financial resources to patients and caregivers who are experiencing, or at risk of, financial debt crisis as a result of their MBC diagnosis.

To receive funding through the STEP Program, patient advocacy groups were invited to submit innovative ideas with the potential to have an impact on the MBC community. The proposals were evaluated by an external review committee made up of experts in psycho-oncology, advocacy, and nurse navigation, as well as an MBC caregiver. Members included:

- William Breitbart, MD, Chairman, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Jimmie C. Holland Chair in Psychiatric Oncology, Attending Psychiatrist, Psychiatry Service, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center;
- Liz Margolies, LCSW, Founder and Executive Director of National LGBT Cancer Network;
- Steven Krupnick, a caregiver; and,
- Dianne Hyman, MSN, RN, OCN, CN-BN, an oncology nurse at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper University Hospital.

"People living with MBC, a currently incurable form of the disease, continue to face considerable gaps in available support and resources compared to those living with earlier stages of breast cancer," said Dianne Hyman, MSN, RN, OCN, CN-BN, an oncology nurse at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper University Hospital, member of the STEP Program external review committee. "We are excited to see these selected programs help address some of the community's unique unmet needs and empower people living with MBC as they navigate their care."

About Novartis in Advanced Breast Cancer

For more than 30 years, Novartis has been tackling breast cancer with superior science, great collaboration and a passion for transforming patient care. With one of the most diverse breast cancer pipelines and one of the largest numbers of breast cancer compounds in development, Novartis leads the industry in discovery of new therapies and combinations, especially in HR+ advanced breast cancer, the most common form of the disease.

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