In April, we announced new advisory roles for 12 leaders in breast cancer. These individuals will join an esteemed group of breast cancer researchers, clinicians, and advocates who help guide the organization’s research programs, which total $956 million since our inception – the largest investment in breast cancer research outside of the U.S. government.

Ten new individuals will join the Komen Scholars, in addition to the 49 currently serving:

**Wayne Dornan, Ph.D.**
Advocates in Science Steering Committee, Smyrna, TN
(survivor, research advocacy)

**Reshma Jagsi, M.D., D.Phil.**
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
(radiation oncology, health outcomes, health care systems delivery)
Marian Johnson-Thompson, Ph.D.
Advocates in Science Steering Committee, Durham, NC
(co-survivor, research advocacy)

Ingrid Mayer, M.D., M.Sci.
Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN
(oncology, clinical trials, novel therapeutics)

Donald McDonnell, Ph.D.
Duke University School of Medicine, Durham, NC
(cancer biology, endocrinology, novel therapeutics)

Julie Palmer, Sc.D., MPH
Boston University, Boston, MA
(co-survivor, health disparities, epidemiology, breast cancer risk, risk reduction)

Amelie Ramirez, Dr. P.H.
University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX
(health disparities, health care systems delivery, public health)

Rebecca Seago-Coyle, MA
Advocates in Science Steering Committee, Rochester, WA
(survivor, research advocacy)
Two long-standing Komen Scholars will continue their service with Komen as new members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), joining 6 continuing members:

**Sohrab Shah, Ph.D.**
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY
*(cancer genomics, computational biology, bioinformatics)*

**Meryl Weinreb, MA**
Advocates in Science Steering Committee, Landenberg, PA
*(survivor, research advocacy)*

**Lisa Carey, M.D.**, of the University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, Chapel Hill, NC, has been a Komen Scholar since 2010 and brings expertise in clinical research, molecular sub-types of breast cancer and treatment response to the SAB.

**Sandy Finestone, Psy.D.**, a Komen Advocate in Science (AIS) from Costa Mesa, CA, is a 30+ year breast cancer survivor and research advocate and has been a volunteer with Susan G. Komen for over 25 years. She brings knowledge in patient support and research advocacy to the SAB.
We congratulate and thank all our Mission Advisors as we continue to move towards our Bold Goal of reducing breast cancer deaths by 50% in the U.S. by 2026!

Komen is Addressing Health Equity

Breast cancer deaths rates are about 40 percent higher for black women in the U.S. compared to white women. In an April U.S. News & World Report article, Komen President and CEO Paula Schneider outlines the injustice of barriers to breast cancer care and Komen’s drive for health equity through our African-American Health Equity Initiative and our Bold Goal.

Komen is aiming to improve our understanding of health equity by funding research that will investigate some of the causes of health disparities. A recent Journal of Clinical Oncology publication, co-authored by Stephanie Wheeler, Ph.D., Komen-funded grantee Katherine Reeder-Hayes, M.D., and Komen SAB member Lisa Carey, M.D., shows that increased financial strain on African-American women may contribute to higher stress, lower treatment compliance and worse breast cancer outcomes. Komen is working to address financial barriers to care by:

1. Providing financial aid to breast cancer patients through the Komen National Treatment Assistant Program. Learn more by calling our National Breast Care Helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN, open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, or by emailing the helpline at helpline@komen.org.
2. Advocating for policies that will improve health insurance coverage, increase federal research funding, support early detection, and increase access to clinical trials.
3. Funding patient navigation programs that guide women through the health care continuum, which includes locating financial resources and addressing barriers such as cost of care.

Komen also offers information about resources to help with financial barriers to breast cancer care.

Komen Advocacy

In a March Komen blog, Komen AIS member Mona Jaffe Rowe discussed her advocacy efforts in Maryland. She spearheaded efforts to urge state law makers to pass legislation requiring insurance companies to cover medically necessary diagnostic imaging no less favorably than screening mammography. Also, in March, representatives from Affiliates, Advocates in Science, Komen Scholars and Komen staff met in D.C. at Komen’s annual Advocacy Summit to encourage policymakers to make breast cancer a priority. Sign up here to stay up-to-date on Komen’s public policy and advocacy efforts!
Representatives from Affiliates, Advocates in Science, Komen Scholars, Komen staff, community members and breast cancer survivors at Komen’s annual Advocacy Summit on March 21-23, 2018.

Alongside the Advocacy Summit, the Komen Health Equity team hosted an Advocacy training pilot called ‘Speak Truth to Power,’ where Komen community stakeholders, Affiliates and staff gathered to collectively discuss how far we’ve come and to collaboratively plan where we are going. The program included several speakers in the advocacy field, collective discussions, and Hill Day visits. The Health Equity team would like to thank the generous funders of this event, the Fund II Foundation and Pfizer, for making the pilot training such a success!
In a recent Komen blog, Chief Scientific Advisors, George Sledge, M.D., and Jennifer Pietenpol, Ph.D., talk about the state of breast cancer research: what we may have missed in 2017, what’s exciting now, and how Komen is poised to tackle the most exciting and important questions in breast cancer!

"Breast cancer, we’re coming after you. We’re coming after you with every tool in our armamentarium. We’re coming after you as a group of patients, physicians, and laboratory researchers – all with the common goal of eradicating you. THESE ARE YOUR LAST DAYS."

- Komen Chief Scientific Advisor, Dr. George Sledge

Komen/Pfizer Partnership is Bringing Effective Solutions for MBC

Pfizer, the European School of Oncology (ESO), the Advanced Breast Cancer Third International Consensus Conference (ABC3), and leaders in the MBC community (including Komen) collaborated to pull together a report on the global analysis of MBC spanning a decade (2005 – 2015). The report, recently published in The Breast, calls attention to the gaps in care, resources and support for MBC patients in different parts of the world.

Unfortunately, in lower
income countries, about 50-80 percent of patients are diagnosed with late stage breast cancer (stage III or IV) compared to 10-15 percent of diagnoses in high-income countries (like the U.S.). Therefore, Komen and Pfizer have partnered to take on the global burden of MBC. You can read more about progress and future goals of this effort in a recent Komen blog.

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**Komen/Pfizer Partnership for Local Education about MBC**

As an extension of this partnership, Komen and Pfizer have teamed up to support educational programs for those living with MBC and their caregivers in the U.S. Specifically, Pfizer is donating $500,000 in support of MBC programming at Komen Affiliates. Through May 31, 2018, Affiliates are encouraged to submit applications for funding, which can include evidence-based patient-focused conferences, events and other activities designed to educate the MBC community at the local level. Learn more [here](#).

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**Komen’s Work in Tanzania**

Komen and the Tanzania Ministry of Health, with input from global health and civil society experts, have developed the [National Guidelines for Early Diagnosis of Breast Cancer and Referral for Treatment in Tanzania](#). The new guidelines are vital to addressing breast cancer in Tanzania – a country where about 80 percent of women are diagnosed with late-stage disease when treatment options are limited. Learn more in a new [Komen Press Release](#).

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**Upcoming Research Funding Opportunities**

Komen will continue its research investment in early career breast cancer researchers! The new Request for Applications (RFAs) will be posted in the next month or two on our [Funding Opportunities](#) page. Stay tuned!
Komen-funded young investigator **Toni Celia-Terrassa, Ph.D.** (left) and Komen Scholar, **Yibin Kang, Ph.D.** (right) in the lab at Princeton University.

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**Komen Kudos!**

- Komen-funded grantee **Lisa Coussens, Ph.D.**, was honored with the **12th AACR-Princess Takamatsu Memorial Lectureship** for her impactful work on the immune response in cancer.
- Former Komen Scholars **Lori Pierce, M.D.** and **Julie Gralow, M.D.**, will be honored as leaders in oncology at the 2018 American Association of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meeting in June. Dr. Pierce will be given the Hologic, Inc. Endowed Women Who Conquer Cancer Mentorship Award & Dr. Gralow will be given the Humanitarian Award.
- Komen-funded grantee **Nikhil Wagle, M.D.**, and his team’s work, presented at the 2018 American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting, was featured in **The ASCO Post**. This work shows we are moving toward improving clinical care for individuals with MBC.
- Komen partner **Metro Elevator** raised over $174,000 for breast cancer research. Thank you, Metro Elevator!
- **Daniel Stover, M.D.**, a Komen grant recipient funded by American Airlines, was named **The Ohio State University May Physician of the Month**.

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**Research Snapshots!**

If cancer cells are found in the lymph node, does that mean they can spread to distant organs? Experts still debate this. Using imaging techniques, a team of scientists, including former Komen grantee **Giorgio Seano, Ph.D.**, co-authored a publication...
in *Science* showing that cancer cells that have spread to a nearby lymph node can invade the blood stream and spread (or metastasize) to other organs.

Although triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) can be treated, we still lack effective, targeted treatments for this aggressive subtype. In a Komen-funded study published in *Nature Medicine*, Thomas (Trey) Westbrook, Ph.D. and colleagues discovered new TNBC therapeutic targets and strategies which will soon be tested in the clinic! Learn more about these important results [here](#).

According to a recent study published in *Clinical Cancer Research*, higher lymphocyte counts predict lower mortality in early-stage TNBC, suggesting that higher immune function improves treatment effectiveness in this patient population. Komen-funded researchers that contributed to these findings include first author Anosheh Afghahi, M.D. (pictured left), Christina Curtis, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Advisor George Sledge, M.D., Komen Scholar Melinda Telli, M.D., and former Komen Scholar Sunil Badve, M.D. More coverage of this study can be found [here](#).

New strategies to block the return of breast cancer are desperately needed to improve patient outcomes. In a Komen-funded study, recently published in *Nature*, Subhamoy Dasgupta, Ph.D., former Komen Scholar Bert O'Malley, M.D., and their team identified two proteins involved in metabolism that could be...
targeted to stop tumor recurrence and/or prevent breast cancer metastasis. You can read more [here](#).

In a new *Journal of Clinical Investigation* publication, Komen-funded grantee *Weibo Lou, Ph.D.* and team show that a protein called ZMYND8 helps estrogen receptor (ER)-positive breast cancers survive and grow in a low-oxygen environment, and may be a target to treat MBC. You can read [more](#) about this exciting data.

In a recent *Nature Communications* publication, *Daniel McGrail, Ph.D.* and colleagues show that cytokine release (mediated by the DNA damage response protein ATM) is a primary driver of T-cell infiltration into a tumor – a characteristic that can dictate response to immunotherapies.

If you have a recent or upcoming publication on your Komen-funded research, please notify your Research Grants Manager or email us.
at researchprograms@komen.org. Your work could be featured in the next newsletter!

Komen Research in the News

- **Reagan-Udall Foundation** – This press release cites the need for accurate information around federal Right-To-Try legislation and the FDA’s Expanded Access Navigator tool (which Komen helped develop).
- **Sunlight Foundation** – Following scrutiny of patient advocacy groups and media, the government’s Office of Women’s Health has restored a single page of breast cancer information to its website. Komen was among those organizations weighing in after word that breast cancer information had been removed from the site. Komen founder Nancy Brinker wrote about it in The Hill.
- **Classy.com** – Komen Sr. Vice President of Development Christina Alford has a new podcast on what motivates her to help people “invest in possibility.”
- **CancerToday** – Komen SAB member Sandy Finestone, Psy.D., discusses how patients make decisions about breast surgery.

Research Resources

Komen funding has generated numerous publicly available resources intended to advance research. Our readers are encouraged to use the below resources, so we can continue to move toward our goal of saving lives.

- The [Komen Tissue Bank](#) (KTB) at the Indiana University Simon Cancer Center is the only repository in the world containing breast tissue and blood products from women who do not show evidence of breast cancer. Please contact the KTB directly if you are interested in using these samples.
- [TNBCtype](#) is a tool that allows you to sub-type TNBC using genomic data. Komen Chief Scientific Advisor, Jennifer Pietenpol, Ph.D., and her team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center developed this tool.
- The MBC Project ([mbcproject.org](http://mbcproject.org)) is a patient-driven initiative that asks MBC patients to share their cancer experiences, medical records, and tumor tissues to accelerate research discoveries. The project has released the first of many publicly accessible data sets into cBioPortal and will soon be sharing raw data in the Genomic Data Commons (GDC). This includes de-identified genomic, clinical, and patient-reported data from 103 tumor samples from 78 patients. The goal of this growing data set is to allow as many researchers as possible to make discoveries that accelerate our understanding of MBC. Find out more at [mbcproject.org/data-release](http://mbcproject.org/data-release).

Take a Walk with a Komen Researcher

[Komen 3-Day events](#) have been scheduled across the nation including Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, Michigan, Philadelphia, San Diego, Seattle and the Twin Cities. If you cannot join us for the 3-day 60-mile journey, then why not commit to 20 miles in
1 day? The money raised will be used to save lives, support community programs and make huge strides in breast cancer research. You can support the work of Komen-funded scientists like Carmen Bergom, M.D., Ph.D. YOU can make an impact one step at a time!

Komen-funded grantee, Carmen Bergom, M.D., Ph.D. trains graduate student Rachel Schlaak at The Medical College of Wisconsin.

**Thank You for Your Support!**

We at Komen value the work our Affiliates do to address breast cancer every day in their local communities. YOU can contribute to this work by participating in an Affiliate event near you, such as a Race For the Cure or More Than Pink Walk. Thank you for your continued support!
Shirley Mertz, Komen Advocate in Science, President of the Metastatic Breast Cancer Network, founding member of the Metastatic Breast Cancer Alliance and one of the nation's most influential MBC advocates, spoke at the Komen Wisconsin Affiliate MBC Symposium on May 1. Find similar local MBC events here.

If you have recently participated in a Komen Affiliate or 3-Day event, please send photos and a brief description to your Research Grant Manager or email us researchprograms@komen.org. Your photo may be featured in our next newsletter!

Upcoming Research Conferences

Susan G. Komen partners with other breast cancer organizations, professional societies, and academic institutions to support a number of patient-focused meetings and scientific conferences each year. Below is a list of Komen-sponsored meetings (*) as well as other conferences that may be of interest:

- American Association of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting - June 1-5, 2018, Chicago, IL.
- *The 17th Congress of the Metastasis Research Society & Young Investigator Satellite Meeting* - August 1-5, 2018, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
Take Action!

Like what you're reading? We'd love your support!

1. **FIND** your local Affiliate.
2. **SIGN UP** for a More Thank Pink Walk, **3-Day**, or **Race for the Cure** event.
3. **VOLUNTEER** at a local event.
4. Become an **ADVOCATE**.
5. Create a project to **FUND-RAISE**.
6. **DONATE** to our Mission!

[Connect](#) with us! Like, subscribe and follow us to keep up with the latest breast cancer news, inspirational stories and more.

**Correction:** Issue 32, March 2018 Research Update Newsletter - Research Snapshots - Dr. Hari Nakshatri's paper was mislabeled as a Nature publication but was an Oncogene publication. The correction is printed [here](#).