



Project
Cure
CRC

Colorectal Cancer Alliance launches Project Cure CRC

In late October 2023, the Colorectal Cancer Alliance announced Project Cure CRC, a new research funding initiative to accelerate basic, translational, and clinical colorectal cancer research to reduce therapeutic unmet needs through the development of new therapies and technologies that provide durable responses for patients.

First project receives funding

The inaugural \$1.6 million Project Cure CRC grant was awarded to Dr. Raghu Kalluri of MD Anderson Cancer Center to develop a discovery science platform to improve and expand the use of immunotherapies in CRC by targeting the tumor immune microenvironment and tumor microenvironment.

Alliance hosts Cure CRC Summit

In December 2023, Project Cure CRC sponsored the Cure CRC Summit in Miami Beach. The Summit welcomed more than 100 prominent scientists to participate in a collaborative environment to foster networking and create new partnerships that will challenge the status quo of current CRC therapies and discover new trajectories to cure CRC now. The Summit focused on eight key topic areas that were selected by the participants prior to the meeting. The topics included:

- Improving Immunotherapy and Cellular Therapies
- ctDNA and Other Forms of Liquid Biopsies
- Improving Speed of Clinical Trial Process
- Developing Therapies, Including Vaccines
- How to Leverage AI and Big Data
- Targeting Cell Signaling Pathways
- Development of Novel Theranostic Molecules
- Exploring and Understanding Oligometastatic Disease



*Photos from the
Cure CRC Summit*

Leadership

Project Cure CRC Co-Chairs

Michael Sapienza

CEO, Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Katie Chudnovsky

Board Member, Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Alliance Project Lead

David Fenstermacher, PhD

Senior Director of Research and Medical Affairs, Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Scientific Co-Chairs

John Marshall, MD

Georgetown University

Scott Kopetz, MD, PhD, FACP

MD Anderson Cancer Center

Christopher Lieu, MD

University of Colorado Cancer Center

Patient Advocate Co-Chair

John Woerner

CRC Survivor and Alliance Board Member

Cure CRC Summit produces hundreds of innovative ideas

The Summit's unique, interactive, and collaborative format produced hundreds of ideas and initiated partnerships between academic and industry researchers from multiple organizations, creating new opportunities to advance new therapies and technologies from bench to bedside. After two and a half days of networking and collaboration, the Scientific Chairs of the Summit summarized the discussions with the need to:

- Optimize adjuvant therapy for local and metastatic CRC
- Optimize oligometastatic disease identification and management
- Identify new therapies that produce major, durable, and complete responses
- Identification of novel therapeutic approaches
 - New target identification using multi-omics strategies
 - Converting cold tumors (immunologically unresponsive) to hot tumors (immunologically responsive)
 - Managing resistance to therapies and emergence of polyclonality in mCRC



RFP set for Q1 2024

Based on the information gathered from top CRC researchers, the Alliance will release a Project Cure CRC RFP in Q1 2024 that will solicit proposals to investigate the ideas highlighted at the Cure CRC Summit. The RFP will focus on transformative CRC research that brings together teams of researchers from academia and industry. The Alliance will also fund many early-career investigator awards.

Learn more:



To achieve these lofty goals, the following new resource needs were identified:

- High-quality, representative data linked to patient-level tissue (tumor, blood, urine, etc.)
 - Clinical/EMR data
 - Clinical trial data
 - Molecular data
- Shared data access through an Alliance-managed portal with AI application support
- Accelerate concept to accrual timeline by removing unnecessary barriers in clinical research
- Alliance connecting patients to clinical trials nationwide via navigation and technology
- Incentivize the best minds and teams by supporting their work
 - Prioritize high-risk, high-reward