



Komen Announces Nearly \$26 Million in New Research Funding for 2018

Striving to achieve our [Bold Goal](#) to reduce the current number of breast cancer deaths by 50% in the U.S. by 2026, Komen [announced](#) nearly \$26 million in new research grant support for 2018. This year, Komen's competitive grant program for early-career investigators was entirely focused on drug resistance and metastatic disease. Grants were awarded to 62 researchers to investigate these critical areas of breast cancer research. Learn more about our investments in each of these areas in our [Research Fast Facts](#).

FY18 Total Research Grants Investment:

62
GRANTS

totaling nearly
\$26 MILLION

susan g. komen.

Komen Announces the 2018 Recipients of Brinker Awards

Two widely respected and prolific breast cancer investigators join the ranks of an esteemed group of scientists as recipients of this year's [Brinker Awards](#) – the highest scientific honor awarded by Susan G. Komen. **Eric Winer, M.D.** (below, pictured left) of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and **Lisa Coussens, Ph.D.** (below, pictured right) of Oregon Health and Science University will [receive](#) the 2018 Susan G. Komen Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Clinical Research and Basic Science, respectively. The Brinker Award Lectures will be held on December 5 during the 2018 Annual [San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium](#).



Komen Crowdfunding – Give Directly to a Specific Mission Project or Research Grant

This year, Susan G. Komen has expanded its crowdfunding campaign to allow donors to support individual research projects and specific mission projects with their donations. Learn more about Komen-funded researchers like [Myles Brown, M.D.](#), [Lisa Newman, M.D.](#), [Elizabeth Wellberg, Ph.D.](#), [Chad Pecot, M.D.](#), [Paula D. Bos, Ph.D.](#), [Kevin Cheung, M.D.](#), [Robert B. Faryabi, Ph.D.](#), and [Jennifer Guerriero, Ph.D.](#), and Komen mission programs, including the [African-American Health Equity Initiative](#), the [Treatment Assistance Program](#), the [Metastatic Breast Cancer Research Program](#) and [National and Local Advocacy](#) efforts on the new Komen crowdfunding [page](#). Take action and donate today!



The 17th Congress of the Metastasis Research Society & Young Investigator Satellite Meeting

Komen recently partnered with the [Metastasis Research Society](#) (MRS) and [METAvivor](#) to host the "Susan G. Komen Patient Advocacy Session for Metastatic Cancers" at the MRS Biennial Congress, broadcast live for online viewing worldwide. During this session, a panel of metastatic cancer patients shared their experiences and conveyed a sense of urgency about translating research breakthroughs into new therapies for metastatic disease.



In addition, Komen provided travel scholarships to 12 patient advocates and 10 early-career investigators to attend the Congress, and awarded 4 "best presentation" prizes to early-career researchers working on metastatic breast cancer projects. Special thanks to Komen Scholars **Yibin Kang, Ph.D.** and **Danny Welch, Ph.D.**, Komen Advocate in Science (AIS) **Shirley Mertz** and the other panelists for delivering a great patient advocacy session and making this partnership a success! More MRS coverage can be found on [Twitter](#).

Komen Partners with Penn State CHOT as a New Industry Member

As part of its Big Data for Breast Cancer (BD4BC) Initiative, Komen joined the [Center for Health Organization Transformation](#) (CHOT) as an industry partner to Penn State. CHOT is an industry-university cooperative research center (I/UCRC) funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and industry partners to conduct research that is both meaningful and applicable to the healthcare industry. This new partnership further expands Komen's BD4BC Initiative to explore the opportunities and challenges of incorporating big data applications into breast oncology research

and clinical care. Within CHOT, Komen will continue to leverage big data to advance discoveries in breast cancer research.



Komen Advocacy & Public Policy

Rally for Medical Research

The 2018 [Rally for Medical Research](#) was a Capitol Hill Day event that brought together nearly 300 national organizations, including Susan G. Komen, to call on our nation's policymakers to make funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) a national priority and raise awareness about the importance of continued investment in medical research. At this year's event, held on September 13 and 14, Komen-funded grantee **Barry Hudson, Ph.D.**, joined Komen staff to rally for increased medical research funding!



[Learn](#) about how you can get involved in Komen's public policy & advocacy work!

Komen's Global Efforts to Improve Breast Health Care

Reducing Delays to Treatment in Mexico

In Mexico, the median time between detection of breast cancer symptoms and the start of treatment is about 7 months. As a result, the Komen-funded *Alerta Rosa* program, led by **Cynthia Villarreal-Garza, M.D., Ph.D.**, was created to improve access to breast care and reduce delays to treatment. Since its inception, the program has reduced the median time between symptoms to



treatment to 33 days, reducing barriers to care in low-resource settings. Read more in a recent publication in [The Oncologist](#).

Improving Health Care Delivery in Brazil

In Brazil, the incidence and mortality rates from non-communicable diseases, including breast cancer, have been steadily increasing. In response, Susan G. Komen and the Breast Health Global Initiative (BHGI) at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Sergipe and the Municipal Secretary of Health of Aracaju, performed a standardized assessment of breast cancer health care delivery in the state of Sergipe, Brazil and included recommendations to improve breast cancer outcomes. Thanks to generous support from Pfizer, the [Sergipe 2018: Breast Healthcare Assessment](#) is now available, along with a [commentary](#). Read more in a [Komen Press Release](#).

Komen Kudos!

- In recognition for her significant contributions to the field of public health, Komen Scholar Alumni **Rena Pasick, Dr.P.H.**, was [named](#) one of the 75 most influential alumni from UC Berkeley School of Public Health.
- Komen Scholar, **Mary-Claire King, Ph.D.**, received the [2018 Dan David Prize for Personalized Medicine](#) and the [2018 Shaw Prize in Life Sciences and Medicine](#) for her work in breast cancer genetics. In addition, she is the recipient of the [2018 American Society of Human Genetics \(ASHG\) Advocacy Award](#).
- In recognition of her important contributions to community healthcare, Komen Scholar, **Amelie Ramirez, Dr.P.H, MPH**, received the [Icons in Healthcare Award](#) from CentroMed, a San Antonio health and human service agency.
- Since 2015, 72 Komen-funded grantees and trainees have received Jon Shevell Travel Scholarships which provide travel funds for early career investigators who are presenting their Komen-funded research at scientific conferences/meetings. Congrats to them all, including the most recent recipients listed here: **Deana Edwards, Ph.D.**, **Ayuko Hoshino, Ph.D.**, **Elizabeth Wellberg, Ph.D.**, **Shoghag Panjarian, Ph.D.**, **Ewune Ewane, Carol Wang, Jaime Fornetti, Ph.D.**, **Omonefe Omofuma, B.Pharm, MSc, Jitendra Meena, Ph.D.**, **Yun Zhang, Ph.D.**, **Sefonias Getachew, BSc, MPH, Wondimu Ayele Manamo, Ph.D.**, **Chiara Gorrini, Ph.D.**, **Haitao Ji Ph.D.**, **Anne Rositch, Ph.D.**, and **Meron Yohannes Nigussie, BSc, MSc**. This is the last year of this travel scholarship program, but a new travel award opportunity will be announced soon.

Research Snapshots!

Despite major advancements in treatment, some HER2-positive breast cancers do not respond well to targeted therapies, such as trastuzumab. In a Komen-funded study published in [Clinical Cancer Research](#), Komen

Scholar **Charles Perou, Ph.D.** (pictured), Komen-grantee, **Maki Tanioka, M.D., Ph.D.**, and team were able to identify markers that predict response to treatment for HER2-positive breast cancer. This information could help clinicians identify the best care for individual patients and ultimately improve survival.



Obesity and diabetes may increase the risk for post-menopausal breast cancer and make recurrence more likely. Additionally, endocrine therapy, which is used to treat estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancer, can lead to weight gain, obesity, and diabetes – complications that could lead to future treatment resistance. In a Komen-funded study published in [JCI Insight](#), **Elizabeth Wellberg, Ph.D.**, and team show that the growth factor receptor, FGFR1, plays a key role in obesity-associated endocrine therapy resistance. She showed that targeting FGFR in combination with standard anti-estrogen therapies may help improve treatment response for obese women with ER+ breast cancer. Read more in a [Komen Press Release](#).

At least half of all cases of hormone-receptor (HR)-positive breast cancer recurrence happen 5 or more years after the initial diagnosis, and there is a need to find better ways to predict these late recurrences. In a new [JAMA Oncology](#) publication, funded in part by Komen, a team of scientists that include **Joseph Sparano, M.D.** (pictured speaking at the 2017 SABCS), Komen Chief Scientific Adviser, **George Sledge, M.D.**, and Komen Scholars, **Antonio Wolff, M.D.**, and **Kathy Miller, M.D.**, show that a simple blood test for circulating tumor cells (CTCs) could help predict late recurrences in HR-positive breast cancer.





Basal-like breast cancer cells share many of the same features as breast stem cells, which are the cells that give rise to all cell types that make up the breast. In a recent [Cell Reports](#) publication, Komen Scholar **Geoffrey Wahl, Ph.D.**, and team, were able to genetically map similarities between human basal-like breast cancer cells and breast stem cells. They identified a group of metabolic genes that go away during breast development but re-emerge in some human breast cancers and metastases. These findings could lead to new diagnostic tools and new ways to prevent or treat breast cancer. Read more coverage [here](#).

Women of African ancestry are more likely to die of breast cancer than white women. When compared to the US, Nigerian women are more likely to be diagnosed with late-stage and more fatal breast cancer. In a [Journal of Clinical Oncology](#) publication, funded in part by Komen, a multi-institutional team led by Komen Scholars **Olufunmilayo Olopade, M.D.** (below, pictured left), and **Mary-Claire King, Ph.D.** (below, pictured right), show that 1 in 8 cases of invasive breast cancer in Nigerian women results from inherited genetic mutations and were able to identify the genes responsible. More coverage on this story can be found [here](#).



Triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) is an aggressive type of breast cancer



with a high risk of metastasis. Komen-funded grantee, **Josep Villanueva, Ph.D.**, has found that a change in the location of the protein HMGA1 may predict metastasis in TNBC. HMGA1 is normally found within the nucleus of a breast cancer cell, but when secreted from the cell (outside of the cell), the incidence of metastasis is increased in TNBC patients. These data, published in [Clinical Cancer Research](#), suggest that HMGA1 could be a predictive biomarker for metastasis. You can read more [here](#).

In a recent [Nature Communications](#) publication, Komen Scholar **Matthew Ellis, M.B., B.Chir.** (below, pictured left), Komen-funded grantee, **Shyam Kavuri, Ph.D.** (below, pictured right), and team identified several mutations associated with poor outcomes in estrogen receptor (ER)-positive breast cancer patients – information that could help improve treatment and guide future clinical trials to prevent breast cancer recurrence and mortality. Read more in a [Komen Press Release](#).

In a new [Cell Reports](#) publication, a team of scientists that include Dr. Ellis, Dr. Kavuri and former Komen-grantees, **Shunqiang Li, Ph.D.**, **Jieya Shao, Ph.D.** and **Christopher Maher, Ph.D.**, show that mutations in the ESR1 gene can drive treatment (endocrine therapy) resistance. Alternative therapies are needed for patients with tumors harboring these gene mutations. Notably, they show that use of CDK4/6 inhibitors may be able to overcome resistance. Read more in a [Komen Press Release](#).



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 in the News

- [A New York Times](#) article focuses on Komen CEO, Paula Schneider. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and beat it. Now, she is using her business experience to fight breast cancer on a larger front.
- In the [DOTmed HealthCare Business News Magazine](#) (page 32): Komen Scholar **Elizabeth Morris, M.D.**, and Komen's Susan Brown and Laurel Pointer were interviewed about their thoughts on the importance of breast MR screening for high-risk patients.
- [Michigan Radio](#) interviewed Komen Scholar **Reshma Jagsi, M.D.**, about a new study showing that breast cancer patients want more guidance when it comes to the [financial](#) impact of their treatment.

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.

"We have had great success with the samples that we previously obtained from the Komen Tissue Bank. We can efficiently grow cells in 3D culture to form normal duct-like structures and induce oncogene expression to promote malignant phenotypes in the cells."

- A Komen Tissue Bank User

- [TNBCtype](#) is a tool that allows sub-typing of triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) using genomic data. Komen Chief Scientific Advisor **Jennifer Pietenpol, Ph.D.**, and her team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center developed this tool.
- The Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC) Project ([mbcproject.org](#)), led by Komen grantee **Nikhil Wagle, M.D.**, is a patient-driven initiative that asks MBC patients to share their cancer experiences, medical records, and tumor tissues to accelerate research discoveries. 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](#).

Take a Walk with a Komen Researcher

The 2018 [Michigan, Twin Cities](#) and [Seattle](#) Komen 3-Day events were a success, and several more [events](#) have been scheduled across the nation including Atlanta, Fort Worth, Philadelphia, and San Diego. If you cannot join us for the 3-day 60-mile

journey, perhaps you can 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 scientists like **Benjamin Vincent, M.D.**, who was recently featured in a recent Komen 3-Day Sidewalks to Science [Blog](#), and make an impact one step at a time!



Thank You for Your Support!

Komen Affiliates are working to address breast cancer in their local communities every day. YOU can contribute to this work by [finding](#) your local Affiliate and participating in an [event](#) near you, such as a [Metastatic Breast Cancer Event](#), [Race For the Cure](#) or More Than Pink Walk. Thank you for your continued contributions!



Komen-funded grantee, **Daniel Stover, M.D.**, and his son at the at the Komen Columbus Race for the Cure in May 2018.

If you have recently participated in a Komen Affiliate or 3-Day event, please send photos and a brief description to your Research Grants Manager or email us at 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 and participate in a number of patient-focused meetings and scientific conferences each year. Below is a list of meetings Komen supports and/or will have a presence at (*), as well as other conferences that may be of interest:

- [*Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Symposium](#) - October 11-14, 2018, Chicago, IL.

- [*Breast Health Global Initiative Global Summit](#) – October 15-17, 2018, Seattle, WA
- [*Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowerment \(FORCE\)](#) - October 18-20, 2018, Sand Diego, CA.
- [*11th AACR Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved](#) - November 2-5, 2018, New Orleans, LA.
- [The American Public Health Association \(APHA\) 2018 Annual Meeting](#) - November 9-14, 2018, San Diego, CA.
- [*San Antonio Breast Cancer Research Symposium](#) - December 4-8, 2018, San Antonio, TX.

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!



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