

# 2017: A Year of Shifting the Lupus Mindset

## To Understand More of the Vast Potential Research Holds

The Lupus Research Alliance gathers and nurtures the brain power of the world's most brilliant scientists, while giving compassionate individuals the chance to get involved and fund truly groundbreaking lupus investigations — and 2017 was a year of exceptional progress!

Today, we look back on many stellar highlights of the year and invite donors to partake in the proud ownership of each success — because none of this remarkable progress would have been possible without your vital support.

*"What we want to do is develop newer, better, and safer treatments for lupus, and we are literally on the cusp of doing that — all made possible by the research the Lupus Research Alliance funds."*

Kenneth M. Farber,  
President & CEO of the Lupus Research Alliance

### We Invested in Innovative Research

The Lupus Research Alliance gave 19 scientists the means to bring their ideas to fruition through three crucial venues:

- 7 scientists received \$4 million in grants through our two-year **Target Identification in Lupus (TIL)** grant program.
- Our **Novel Research Grant Program** awarded \$3 million for 10 high-risk, high-reward, novel research projects relevant to basic, translational, and clinical investigations in lupus.
- The **Dr. William E. Paul Distinguished Innovator Award in Lupus and Autoimmunity** challenged two exceptional scientists to pursue innovative, hypothesis- or discovery-driven projects with \$1.25 million in grants.

### We Accelerated Drug Development

We founded the **Lupus Clinical Investigators Network (LuCIN)** to advance clinical trials and facilitate the development of much-needed new lupus treatments.

In 2017, we propelled five studies conducted through the LuCIN network with objectives that ranged from evaluating the benefits of using timed-released prednisone ... to using MRI technology to assess lupus nephritis ... to testing a smartphone app letting lupus patients report symptoms in real time — and more.

### We Fostered Collaboration

This year, the Lupus Research Alliance again played a pivotal role in bringing together the key players in the fight against lupus — the lupus community, the pharmaceutical industry, the U.S. government, and our own grantees.

- Our **Corporate Leadership Circle** invited pharmaceutical and biotech companies to share strategic priorities and consult on the best ways to deliver new treatments.
- Our **Lupus Industry Council** unified industry and academia to address common obstacles and accelerate lupus drug development.

- We worked with the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, and the **National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS)** toward a better understanding of lupus and diseases of the bones, joints, muscles, and skin.



Forum for Discovery

Closer to home, Lupus Research Alliance-funded scientists met at our annual **Forum for Discovery** collaborative meeting in New York City in October to share their aims, progress, and latest findings.

At the conclusion of her presentation, **Erika Boesen, PhD**, from Nebraska Medical Center, said, *"The passion of the investigators in this room is making lupus history. Kudos to the Lupus Research Alliance for bringing such an impressive body of scientists together — so that we can all learn from each other."*

### We Advocated for Lupus Research

Our advocacy work brought in urgently needed millions for lupus research. The Lupus Research Alliance led an advocacy effort that resulted in the establishment of the \$5 million **Lupus Medical Research Program** within the Congressionally Directed Medical Programs under the Department of Defense. Another effort garnered \$2 billion from the NIH to advance medical research, including research into lupus.

We also helped create a platform for patients to voice their concerns. The **Lupus Patient-Focused Drug Development (PFDD) Initiative** — a collaborative effort with the Lupus and Allied Diseases

Association and the Lupus Foundation of America — provided the FDA with the perspectives of people with lupus while empowering them with the knowledge that their voices can inform regulatory decisions.

### We Celebrated Outstanding Research

- This year's Lupus Insight Prize of \$150,000 was awarded to **Virginia Pascual, MD**, for a project that shows great promise in understanding the events leading to lupus flares.

*"Lupus in childhood is even more aggressive than in adults and there is a higher incidence of kidney disease. So, for me, the challenge is to better understand the disease and to help patients through research."*

*"These kids have definitely touched my life. I have seen them suffer the consequences of having lupus and that drives my research."*

Virginia Pascual, MD

### We Transformed Compassion into Research

Average Americans achieved the extraordinary. By participating in our national grassroots fundraising effort — **Walk with Us to Cure Lupus** — people from all walks of life asked their families, friends, and colleagues to sponsor them in support of the Lupus Research Alliance. These determined individuals gave it their all — and it paid off! Since 2002, they have generated nearly \$36 million for the Lupus Research Alliance's critical scientific initiatives.



NYC Walk with Us to Cure Lupus

## 2017 Grant Awardees Illuminate Pathways to New Treatments

The Lupus Research Alliance congratulates the following 2017 **Target Identification in Lupus** grant recipients and wishes each investigator continued success bringing their ideas to fruition. With such stellar scientists, the future of lupus research looks bright indeed.

### Robert Caricchio, MD

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
*The Role of Bacterial Infections in the Pathogenesis of Lupus*

### Laura Carrel, PhD

The Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Hershey, PA  
*Targeting the Inactive X Chromosome in Lupus*

### Katherine A. Fitzgerald, PhD

University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA  
*Characterization of STING SAVI Gain of Function Mutations*

### Chandra Mohan, MD, PhD

University of Houston, Houston, TX  
*ALCAM in LUPUS*

### Peter A. Nigrovic, MD

Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA  
*Defining New Targets in Lupus through Identification of Non-coding SNPs*

### Janos Peti-Peterdi, MD, PhD

USC/University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA  
*Targeting Endogenous Glomerular Repair in Lupus Nephritis*

### Betty Tsao, PhD

Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC  
*Finding Druggable Pathways Affected by the R90H-NCF1 SLE Risk Variants*