

Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation

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Mission

The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation aims to accelerate breakthroughs by providing the most promising early-career scientists with funding to pursue innovative cancer research. It identifies emerging leaders who demonstrate the greatest potential to achieve breakthroughs in how cancer is diagnosed, treated, and prevented, and supports their work through one of four main award programs: Damon Runyon Fellowship, Pediatric Cancer Fellowship, Clinical Investigator, and Innovation Awards.

Strategy/Approach

The foundation offers four grant programs aimed at encouraging and advancing the work of early-career cancer researchers with high promise. Each program is designed to address a need or fill a gap in cancer research funding. The rigorous grant making process is highly competitive, and each program is overseen by a separate committee of scientists who select the award recipients.

As of June 2011, 83.7 percent of the foundation's expenditures were spent on research programs, with the remaining 16.3 percent going toward fundraising and administration. According to the foundation, 100 percent of all direct donations are used to support cutting-edge scientific research; administrative and fundraising costs are paid out of the Damon Runyon Broadway Tickets service and endowment.

Research Portfolio

Since its founding in 1946, the foundation has invested more than \$250 million in promising young cancer researchers.

- **Damon Runyon Fellowship Award** – Supports the training of promising postdoctoral scientists as they embark upon their research careers. This funding enables them to be mentored by established investigators in leading research laboratories across the country.
 - \$156,000 total over three years for basic scientists and \$186,000 total over three years for physician-scientists
- **Damon Runyon-Sohn Pediatric Cancer Fellowship Award** – Provides funding to basic scientists and clinicians who conduct research that has the potential to significantly impact the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of one or more pediatric cancers.
 - \$156,000 total over three years for PhDs and \$186,000 total over three years for MDs
- **Damon Runyon Clinical Investigator Award** – Launched in 2000 to help speed the process of

translating laboratory discoveries into cures and bolstering the cadre of translational scientists in cancer.

- \$450,000 total over three years plus up to \$100,000 for medical school loan repayment; opportunity for continuation grant upon completion of \$300,000 total over two years
- **Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Award** – Supports cancer research by “exceptionally creative thinkers” with high-risk/high-reward ideas that lack sufficient preliminary data to obtain traditional funding.
 - \$450,000 total over three years

Partnership Practices

The foundation engages in academic, nonprofit, and government alliances and has long-standing partnerships with biotech and pharmaceutical companies. For example, **Accelerating Cancer Cures** is a unique collaboration among the biopharmaceutical industry, academia, and the foundation formed to address the shortage of high-quality clinical investigators. It supports early-career clinical scientists with the potential to make cutting-edge breakthroughs in cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. An annual symposium brings together the members to foster communication and collaboration. Current members are Eli Lilly, Genentech, Celgene, Pfizer, Merck, Millennium, and Takeda.

Financials

The foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit health organization. The most recent financial information available is from 2012.¹

Year ending 6/30/2011:

- Revenue: \$11,962,723
- Assets: \$107,113,018
- Grants: \$11,771,648 for 55 new awards
- Gifts received: \$12,017,063
- Expenditures: \$13,537,038
- Total giving: \$10,193,874

¹ Information obtained from the Damon Runyon Cancer Research foundation website, http://www.damonrunyon.org/docs/Damon_Runyon_2012_Form_990.pdf, April 2014.

Key Accomplishments

- Since its founding in 1946, the foundation has invested nearly \$270 million in 3,400 promising young cancer researchers.
- In July 2013, the foundation announced \$3.6 million in funding for nine new young clinical investigators.
- Alumni include 11 Nobel Laureates and leaders of major research centers across the globe.
- Foundation-funded scientists were the first to scientifically link lung cancer and cigarette smoking (1954), cure a solid tumor with chemotherapy (1956), identify the first cancer-causing gene (1970), determine that the human papillomavirus is a cause of head and neck cancer (2000), and successfully treat melanoma with immunotherapy (2011).
- Foundation-funded scientists have also contributed extensively to the development of leading therapies including Erbitux, Yervoy, Bexxar, and Herceptin.
- In January 2014, the foundation announced \$2.25 million in funding for six scientists with novel approaches to fighting cancer as part of the Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Awards.
- 100% of donations to the foundation fund cancer research

Leadership

The foundation is governed by a **Board of Directors** and overseen by a New York-based leadership **staff**.

- **President and CEO:** Lorraine W. Egan, lorraine.egan@damonrunyon.org
- **Chief Scientific Officer:** Yung S. Lie, PhD yung.lie@damonrunyon.org
- **Director of Development:** Elizabeth Portland elizabeth.portland@damonrunyon.org