

# Together, our 2023 impact on Canadian myeloma scientific and research advancements

Myeloma Canada science and research impact report  
2023

## 11 every day.



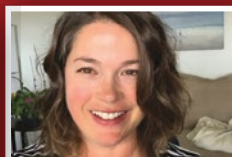
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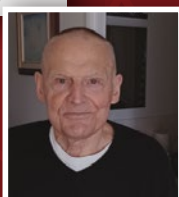
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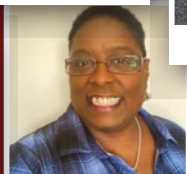
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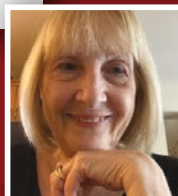
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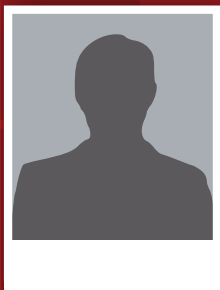
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David



Bev



...and more who may not yet know.



**MYELOMA  
CANADA**  
MAKING MYELOMA MATTER

[www.myeloma.ca](http://www.myeloma.ca)

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## A word from Martine Elias Executive Director, Myeloma Canada

**2023 was a banner year for Myeloma Canada's science and research funding initiatives.** We not only introduced 3 new grants, but we entered into 10 important partnerships, each one focused on advancing essential Canadian myeloma research. We are thrilled to announce that we are currently supporting more than 28 exciting science and research projects.

**While it may seem cliché, the reality is that 'we are stronger together'.** By collaborating with influential partners with whom we share common values, goals and work ethics, our collective footprint is larger, carries more weight, and goes further than if we embarked on the journey alone. Together we are eliciting a deeper and more meaningful impact on the Canadian myeloma science and research arena.

**The breadth of projects in which we are investing varies** from supporting young, promising myeloma investigators, to funding nationally and internationally acclaimed Canadian researchers and clinical research groups, to creating essential guidelines to advance the standardization of myeloma diagnosis, treatment, and management across Canada, and more. To celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our flagship Multiple Myeloma March, we introduced a new funding program to support myeloma research at the local level. This program was so successful that it will be offered again in 2024.

**Our industry-sponsored Myeloma Canada Scientific Roundtable remains a unique and highly powerful annual gathering** of leading minds in myeloma, pharmaceutical industry partners, and valued patient volunteers from the Myeloma Canada community. The vital relationships we have built and sustained over the years are closing the gaps between clinical and real

world evidence research, and are testimony to the ongoing importance and value of this tremendous event.

**In 2023, Myeloma Canada directly contributed to investments of over \$1.34M in myeloma science and research projects.** Of this amount, over \$875K came from money raised through Myeloma Canada fundraising activities, and community fundraising initiatives and events. The balance came from collaborating and leveraging our strategic partnerships with other organizations who share an interest in myeloma and invested in additional myeloma research projects. **Together we are improving quality and length of life for Canadians with myeloma, and getting closer to finding a cure for this challenging disease.**

**Clearly none of this would be realized without the steadfast generosity of our donors, and the unwavering support of our community members and sponsors. Thank you for your invaluable contributions.**

**I hope that as you read through our 2023 science and research impact report, you will share our enthusiasm, pride, and hope for the future.** We are all playing a fundamental role in bringing life-changing innovative breakthroughs in treatment therapies, improved diagnostics and enhanced quality of life to fruition.

We are on the cusp of finding a cure for myeloma. **Together, we will get there!**

Martine Elias

# Myeloma Canada: In pursuit of a cure and prevention

Myeloma Canada is the only national charitable patient organization created by, and for, Canadians impacted by multiple myeloma. **Founded in 2005 as a grassroots initiative, Myeloma Canada remains committed to our ‘people-first’ focus in all that we do.**

## Our promise

To improve the lives and empower all Canadians affected by myeloma, accelerate access to the best care, while supporting the pursuit of its cure and prevention.

## Our pledge

We pledge to cultivate and maintain an inclusive environment for our community and our organization. This includes respecting and addressing the diverse needs of all people — First Nations, Métis, and Inuit; under-represented and marginalized populations; the LGBTQIA2S+ community; cultural, racial, and ethnic minorities — in all that we do.

16  
research projects

12  
science projects



### CURING AND PREVENTING MYELOMA

through investment  
in Canadian research.



### BEST CARE

by accelerating  
equitable access  
to the best healthcare  
and treatments.



### IMPROVING LIVES

by empowering and  
supporting all  
Canadians impacted  
by myeloma.

# Our research principles and strategy

*Building hope through science and research*



## Myeloma Canada research principles

**Myeloma Canada is committed to supporting prioritized, clinically relevant research projects that correspond to, and further, our promise.**

Projects in which we invest identify and address knowledge gaps in the diagnosis, treatment and science of myeloma and related plasma cell disorders, with the goal of improving quality of life and ultimately, finding a cure for this devastating disease.

While some projects may be conducted regionally, the research impact must benefit the national or international myeloma community.

As a grassroots organization, our research investment principles are anchored in the core values that support the priorities identified by our myeloma community. As such, they must satisfy one or more of the following principles:

- 1.** have a direct impact on **improving quality of life and/or survival**;
- 2.** have a direct impact on **increasing access** to new therapies, new treatment combinations, or improved treatment administration;
- 3.** contribute to **health systems improvements** for people with myeloma or a related plasma cell disorder.



## Myeloma Canada research strategy

Our research investment strategy is based on 2 major tenets identified by our community as being important to them:

- 1. To accelerate the development of clinical trials** and associated studies by funding relevant clinical trial groups.
- 2. To accelerate and improve patient quality of life and/or survival** through individual research projects reviewed and allocated by Myeloma Canada's Independent Research Review Committee.

## Imagine Canada accredited!

*Transparency, equity and continuous improvement*

**On November 9, 2023, Myeloma Canada attained Imagine Canada Level 2 Standards Program accreditation.** As part of the accreditation process, our governance, practices and policies have all been rigorously peer-reviewed and officially recognized as being exemplary. This includes the foundation upon which our science and research strategy is built and executed, the processes we have in place for grant allocation, and more.



The significance of this achievement is important on many levels, but primarily in terms of assuring anyone interacting with Myeloma Canada, in any capacity, has the security in knowing they are interacting with an organization that is trusted, reputable, honourable, forward-thinking and accountable to its community of stakeholders.

**Myeloma Canada:  
Making myeloma matter  
since 2005.**

To learn more, visit  
[myeloma.ca](http://myeloma.ca)



# 2023 highlights

## Myeloma Canada research investments

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**Strategy #1: To accelerate the development of clinical trials** and associated studies by funding relevant clinical trial groups.

### The Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) MY.13 trial

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*Fueling innovative Canadian clinical trials in myeloma*

Total funding: \$450,000

Supporting the advancement of Canadian 'home-grown' clinical trials in myeloma is critical to advancing novel treatments and drug therapies for our Canadian myeloma community. As such, in 2023 Myeloma Canada provided the CCTG with funding of \$450,000 to help advance the CCTG MY.13 clinical trial:

***A phase III non-inferiority randomized controlled trial of fixed duration versus continuous daratumumab among transplant ineligible older adults with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma***



Myeloma Canada funding will help support the collection, analysis, and presentation of patient reported outcomes that will enable quality of life, health utilities, and health economic analyses.

Over the next 4 years, 559 patients from approximately 30 Canadian centres will be enrolled and randomly assigned to continuous or fixed duration daratumumab therapy. Patients will continue to be followed for an additional 4 years post treatment, resulting in a total study duration of 8.1 years.

**The primary endpoint of the trial is progression-free survival. Planned secondary endpoints include quality of life, overall survival, and cost-effectiveness.**

**The core research team includes:**



**Dr Hira Mian**  
MY.13 Study Chair,  
Hematology oncologist  
Juravinski Cancer Centre  
Hamilton (ON)



**Dr Annette Hay**  
CCTG Senior Investigator  
Kingston Health Sciences Centre  
Kingston (ON)



**Dr Chris Venner**  
Co-Chair of CCTG's Myeloma  
Working Group  
BC Cancer Vancouver Centre  
Vancouver (BC)



**Dr Tony Reiman**  
Co-Chair of CCTG's Myeloma  
Working Group  
Saint John Regional Hospital  
Saint John (NB)





**Strategy #2: To accelerate and improve patient quality of life and/or survival** through individual research projects reviewed and allocated by Myeloma Canada's Independent Research Review Committee.

## Furthering our research priorities

# The Aldo Del Col Research Grant and the Myeloma Priority Setting Partnership

### *Honouring the legacy and memory of Myeloma Canada's co-founder*

The Aldo Del Col Research Grant competition was launched in 2022 in honour of the legacy and memory of Myeloma Canada's co-founder.

Aldo Del Col Research Grants fund patient-prioritized Canadian research projects that help address the knowledge gaps in the diagnosis and treatment of myeloma, and/or related plasma cell disorders, identified through [the Myeloma Priority Setting Partnership \(PSP\)](#).

The Myeloma PSP was a collaborative project between the Horizon Health Network, the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT UNIT (MSSU), and Myeloma Canada, and adhered to established PSP practices set by the James Lind Alliance.

**The results of the Myeloma PSP are important to funders and researchers, and give the Canadian myeloma community a prominent voice in directing Myeloma Canada's future research strategy toward projects they defined as meaningful.**

**The project, the first of its kind for myeloma, started in 2019 and concluded in 2021 with the publication of the **Top 10 future myeloma research questions as identified by our Canadian myeloma community:****

- 1.** How can we cure myeloma?
- 2.** Are novel immunotherapies (e.g., CAR T) effective for the treatment of myeloma?
- 3.** How can we improve the diagnosing (e.g., faster, less invasive) of myeloma, and what is the impact of earlier diagnosis on patient outcomes (e.g., organ damage, bone deterioration)?
- 4.** What are new treatments for myeloma patients that will improve life expectancy with fewer adverse side effects (e.g., pain, nausea, neuropathy, immune suppression)?
- 5.** How can we personalize a patient's treatment based on their type of myeloma and genetic profile, and what is the impact of personalized medicine on treatment efficacy and disease outcomes?
- 6.** How can we prevent bone deterioration and/or repair bones that have been damaged without negative side effects (like those associated with bisphosphonates) or surgery?
- 7.** How can we safely reduce, cycle, or stop the use of medications (e.g., Dexamethasone and Revlimid) to reduce the side effects of treatment and maintain control over myeloma?
- 8.** How can we reduce or manage the short-term effects (e.g., diarrhea, nausea, fatigue, emotional challenges, skin reactions) and long-term effects (e.g., vision loss, loss of muscle strength) of myeloma treatment?
- 9.** What is the most effective way (i.e., drug combinations, sequence, frequency, and intensity) to treat refractory, relapsed, and drug resistant myeloma?
- 10.** Can we develop treatments specifically for high risk or aggressive myeloma that will improve outcomes for these patients?



## 2023 Aldo Del Col Research Grants

*Equal co-funding partnership with  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada*

4 grants awarded  
Total amount \$400,000

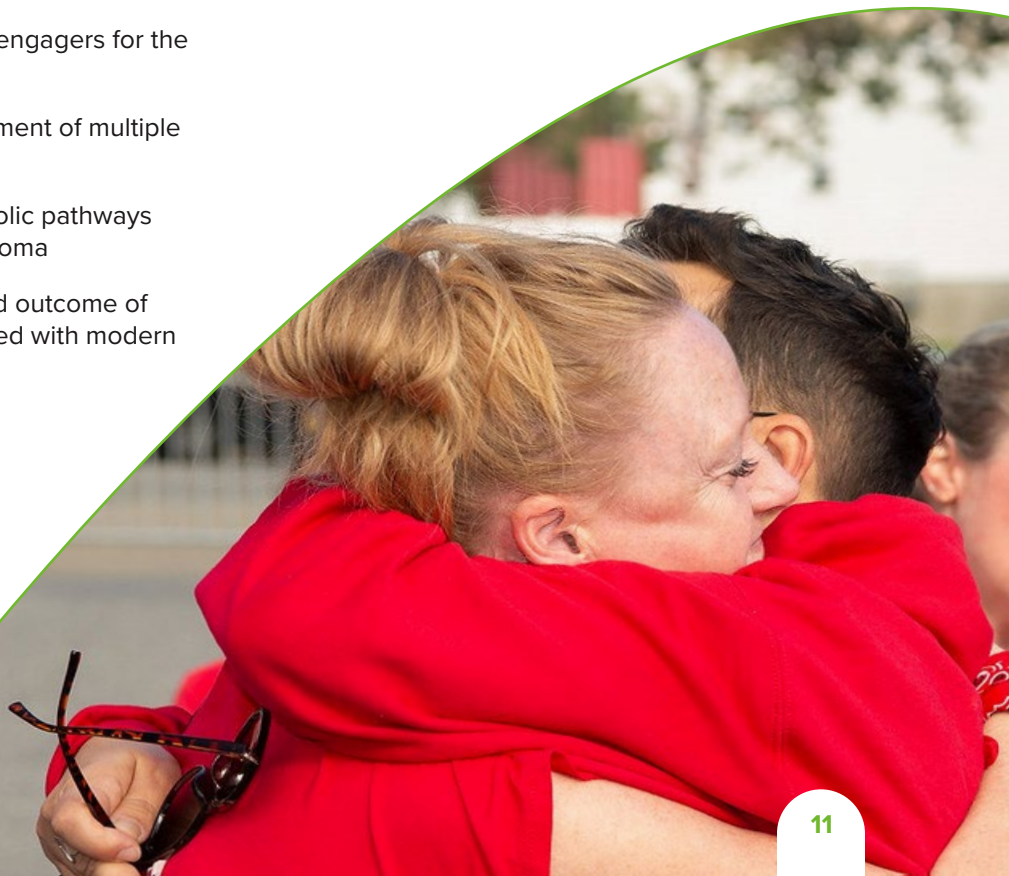
**For the first time, Myeloma Canada and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada proudly collaborated** on an equal co-funding partnership (each organization providing 50% of the awarded funds) to advance the following 4 research initiatives:

- Creating nanobody bispecific engagers for the treatment of multiple myeloma
- Targeting PIKfyve for the treatment of multiple myeloma
- Defining the origin and metabolic pathways of osteoclasts in multiple myeloma
- Understanding the biology and outcome of young myeloma patients treated with modern therapies in Canada



LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY OF  
CANADA\*

SOCIÉTÉ DE  
LEUCÉMIE &  
LYMPHOME  
DU CANADA\*



# 1. Creating nanobody bispecific engagers for the treatment of multiple myeloma

Total amount awarded: \$100,000 / 2 years  
(\$50,000 / year)



**Scott McComb, PhD**  
National Research Council  
of Canada, Ottawa, ON

## PSP priorities

The project will help address knowledge gaps for the following priorities:

**#2:** Are novel immunotherapies (e.g., CAR T) effective for the treatment of myeloma?

**#4:** What are new treatments for myeloma patients that will improve life expectancy with fewer adverse side effects (e.g., pain, nausea, neuropathy, immune suppression)?

**#9:** What is the most effective way (i.e., drug combinations, sequence, frequency, and intensity) to treat refractory, relapsed, and drug resistant myeloma?

## Background

People with triple refractory myeloma (where the disease is not responsive to *immunomodulatory drugs, proteasome inhibitors, and anti-CD38 antibodies*) unfortunately have a poor prognosis. While chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR T) therapies show great promise in treating the disease, the cost and complexity of (CAR T)

manufacturing has limited its accessibility, particularly in Canada. Bispecific antibodies, however, can provide a treatment option that is more broadly accessible with shorter patient wait times, increased dosing flexibility, and at a lower cost than (CAR T) therapies.

Although a bispecific T-cell engager (BiTE; teclistamab) was approved by Health Canada in 2023 for the treatment of myeloma, clinical access in Canada is still limited. Similar to BiTEs, bispecific natural killer cell engagers (BiKEs) may have less toxicity than T-cell targeting bispecific antibodies, though they are less explored and have fewer molecules in development.

## Nanobody bispecific engagers

Scott McComb, PhD, and his research team have well-established expertise in myeloma target identification, identification of novel antibodies, and immunotherapeutic development.

**In this study, the researchers propose to generate novel high quality ‘llama-derived single-domain antibodies’ (known as nanobodies) that bind strongly to proteins expressed on myeloma cells. The team will then use these new nanobodies to generate new BiTE and BiKE molecules to test their functionality for inducing T-cell or NK-cell mediated myeloma killing.**

Downstream of this work, the team intends to rapidly translate one or more of the new therapeutics for clinical trials in Canada.

## 2. Targeting PIKfyve for the treatment of multiple myeloma

Total amount awarded: \$100,000 / 2 years  
(\$50,000 / year)



**Dr Keith Stewart**

*Princess Margaret Cancer Centre,  
Toronto, ON*



**Dr Cecilia Bonolo de Campos**

*Princess Margaret Cancer Centre,  
Toronto, ON*

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### PSP priorities

The project will help address knowledge gaps for the following priorities:

**#4:** What are new treatments for myeloma patients that will improve life expectancy with fewer adverse side effects (e.g., pain, nausea, neuropathy, immune suppression)?

**#9:** What is the most effective way (i.e., drug combinations, sequence, frequency, and intensity) to treat refractory, relapsed, and drug resistant myeloma?

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### Background

Survival rates for people with myeloma have significantly improved and more people are living longer with a better quality of life than before. While this is extremely encouraging,

most individuals do ultimately relapse because of drug resistance. Two urgent challenges immediately become evident:

1. identify novel therapeutic alternatives;
2. understand the mechanisms of treatment resistance in order to prevent or overcome myeloma relapses.

### PIKfyve inhibition

Dr Keith Stewart and team endeavoured to detect unrecognized, vulnerable myeloma targets to establish a new approach to treating myeloma.

**PIKfyve was identified as a druggable novel target.**

**Among other molecules, the highly potent PIKfyve inhibitor PIK-001 has shown robust anti-myeloma activity in preliminary analyses.** In this study, the researchers are further investigating the cytotoxicity, (i.e., the degree a substance can cause damage to a cell) of PIK-001 against human myeloma cells, exploring combination protocols with known myeloma therapeutics, and characterizing the mechanisms of resistance to PIKfyve inhibition.

**The pre-clinical data obtained by this study will inform a planned phase 1 clinical trial design and further develop these novel potent PIKfyve inhibitors for regulatory approvals for clinical use. This will represent an important and exciting addition to the myeloma treatment arsenal for the myeloma patient community.**

### 3. Defining the origin and metabolic pathways of osteoclasts in multiple myeloma

Total amount awarded: \$100,000 / 1 year



**Dr Florian Kuchenbauer**  
*Terry Fox Laboratory, BC Cancer  
Research Institute, Vancouver, BC*

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#### PSP priorities

The project will help address knowledge gaps for the following priorities:

**#6:** How can we prevent bone deterioration and/or repair bones that have been damaged without negative side effects (like those associated with bisphosphonates) or surgery?

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#### Background

One of the most common and debilitating features of myeloma is the effect it has on bones. Abnormal plasma cells (myeloma cells) in the bone marrow affect the surrounding bone, causing soft spots to develop. These soft spots, referred to as osteolytic or lytic lesions, lead to weakened bones, an increased risk of fractures, decreased mobility, and pain that is often severe, chronic, and difficult to manage. As such, lytic lesions can severely compromise an individual's functional abilities and independence.

Lytic bone lesions often indicate advanced disease progression and are associated with a higher risk of complications, including hypercalcemia, spinal cord compression, and increased susceptibility to infection. Osteolytic lesions can also lead to anemia and increased susceptibility to bleeding. As such, finding new treatments that specifically target bone remodeling processes is crucial for people with myeloma.

Innovative therapeutic approaches that can inhibit bone degradation and promote bone formation can prevent fractures and improve overall disease management.

**Dr Florian Kuchenbauer and team are researching novel solutions for preserving bone structure and preventing fractures. Such treatments can potentially reduce complications, enhance response to anti-myeloma therapies, and extend survival.**

**Advancing our understanding of osteolytic bone lesions and developing novel therapeutic strategies holds great promise for improving outcomes and the overall well-being of individuals living with this difficult and complex disease.**

## 4. Understanding the biology and outcome of young myeloma patients treated with modern therapies in Canada

Total amount awarded: \$100,000 / 2 years  
(\$50,000 / year)



**Dr Jean Roy**

*Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont,  
Université de Montréal,  
Montreal, QC*

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### PSP priorities

The project will help address knowledge gaps for the following priorities:

**#1:** How can we cure myeloma?

**#5:** How can we personalize a patient's treatment based on their type of myeloma and genetic profile, and what is the impact of personalized medicine on treatment efficacy and disease outcomes?

**#10:** Can we develop treatments specifically for high risk or aggressive myeloma that will improve outcomes for these patients?

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### Background

Young myeloma patients, as defined in this study, are people 50 years old or less.

While myeloma is devastating to anyone at any age, younger patients face unique challenges:

- They can potentially lose the greatest number of years to the disease because it occurs during their most productive years of life, and
- the disease, its treatment, and its repercussions leave a negative impact on their young families.

**Very little is known about young patients' clinical and biological characteristics at diagnosis and how those characteristics can affect their survival.** There is currently scant data on young myeloma patients treated with modern therapies available in the research literature and no data on young Canadians with myeloma. Optimal disease management remains unclear because younger people with myeloma also tend to be underrepresented in clinical trials.

Using the Canadian Myeloma Research Group database, Dr Jean Roy and his team will be retrospectively analyzing data from approximately 530 young patients.

**The knowledge gained from the project will:**

- 1. help Canadian clinicians provide accurate survival data to their young patients treated with modern therapies, and**
- 2. provide essential data to design prospective clinical trials using novel cellular therapies with the aim of a cure.**

# 2023 Défi Everest Challenge Research Grant

*In partnership with Myeloma Foundation 8849M*

In 2022, Myeloma Canada partnered with *Myeloma Foundation 8849M* on the Défi Everest Challenge to raise money for myeloma research.



## 1. Evaluating the epidemiology and health outcomes of indigenous patients with multiple myeloma in Saskatchewan

Total amount awarded: \$59,500



**Dr Alissa Visram**  
*Ottawa Hospital Research Institute,  
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON*



**Dr Julie Stakiw**  
*University of Saskatchewan,  
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency,  
Saskatoon, SK*

### PSP priorities

The project will help address knowledge gaps for the following priority:

**#3:** How can we improve the diagnosing (e.g., faster, less invasive) of myeloma, and what is the impact of earlier diagnosis on patient outcomes (e.g., organ damage, bone deterioration)?

### Background

By co-developing strategies with individuals from First Nations and Métis who have myeloma, or who are caring for someone with myeloma, **the overarching goal of Drs Visram and Stakiw's research project is to implement sustainable changes in healthcare delivery that will lead to earlier diagnosis, improved access to treatment, and better health outcomes for Indigenous folks with myeloma.**



**This project is the first step in achieving their goal as it will identify the presence and extent of disparities in access to subspecialty management for Indigenous patients.** The study is being done with Saskatchewan patients with the hope of expanding to other provinces in the future.

Outcomes will be used to inform the design of a qualitative study that will include multidisciplinary healthcare providers and Indigenous patients to identify the barriers to care. **To this end, the research team will co-develop strategies for change to policy to positively impact healthcare equity for First Nations and Métis patients.**

**Data will also be used to:**

- **identify knowledge gaps** among various subspecialty groups;
- **develop targeted educational programs** for Indigenous peoples to increase awareness of the workup and management of plasma cell disorders;
- **improve timely diagnosis and access** to appropriate services.

**Next steps will include:**

- 1.** studying the likelihood of receiving treatment among Indigenous versus non-Indigenous patients,
- 2.** assessing how health outcomes (progression free survival, overall survival) differ between Indigenous myeloma patients versus the general Canadian myeloma patient population.

## **2. Supporting the Collection of Real-time Myeloma Data in New Brunswick**

**Benefitting: Vitalité Health Network**

Total amount : \$27,000

Myeloma Canada and *Myeloma Foundation 8849M* partnered to support the collection of real-time myeloma patient data at the Vitalité Health Network, a regional health authority providing and managing healthcare and services in an area covering northern and southeastern New Brunswick.

The contribution will be used towards the hiring of a database coordinator to assist with the data collection under the supervision of Dr Eve St-Hilaire at the Dr. Leon-Richard Oncology Centre in Moncton.

**NEW for 2023**

## **Multiple Myeloma March Research Fund-sharing Partnership Program**

*Celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Multiple Myeloma March, Myeloma Canada's flagship fundraising, awareness, and community event*

New Myeloma Canada collaboration with qualifying Canadian research centres  
Total funding awarded: \$90,835.59

In the Fall of 2023, Myeloma Canada celebrated the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our flagship national fundraising and awareness event, the Multiple Myeloma March. In honour of this milestone, a new research grant was created to support myeloma research at the local level. **With this initiative, funds raised through the 2023 Marches went toward qualifying local research projects.**

Charitable organizations associated with a Canadian myeloma treatment centre or university involved with qualifying myeloma research projects were eligible for this new program.

Each were given the opportunity to apply to partner with Myeloma Canada and their closest Multiple Myeloma March to receive a research grant of up to 50% of the net proceeds from that specific March.

For more information on the Multiple Myeloma March (MMM) Research Fund-sharing Partnership program, [click here](#).



**MULTIPLE MYELOMA MARCH**

## 2023 winners of the MMM Research Fund-sharing Partnership Program:

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**Dr Victor Jimenez Zepeda**

*Tom Baker Cancer Centre,  
Calgary, AB*

***Sarcopenia in Multiple Myeloma and AL Amyloidosis: Impact of Treatment and Effects of Sarcopenia on Clinical Survival Outcomes, a Pilot Study at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre***

**Partner:** University of Calgary

**Partnering March:** Airdrie, AB

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**Lisa A. Porter, PhD**

*WE-SPARK Health Institute,  
Windsor, ON*

***Establishing a Multiple Myeloma Drug Screening Platform to Predict Patient Response to Therapy***

**Partner:** University of Windsor

**Partnering March:** Windsor-Essex County, ON

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**Dr Hira Mian**

*Juravinski Cancer Centre,  
Hamilton, ON*

***Exploring the Efficacy and Effectiveness Gap for Patients Receiving Treatment for Multiple Myeloma***

**Partner:** Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation

**Partnering March:** Hamilton-Niagara, ON

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**Dr Sathish Gopalakrishnan**

*Health Sciences North,  
Sudbury, ON*

***Outcomes of Myeloma Patients in Northern Ontario***

**Partner:** Health Sciences North Research Institute

**Partnering March:** Sudbury, ON

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## 2023 winners of the MMM Research Fund-sharing Partnership Program:



**Peter Stirling, PhD**

*Terry Fox Laboratory,  
Vancouver, BC*

**Targeting Replication Stress Tolerance Genes for Myeloma Therapy**

**Partner:** BC Cancer Foundation & BC Cancer

**Partnering March:** Vancouver, BC



**Dr Julie Stakiw**

*University of Saskatchewan,  
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency,  
Saskatoon, SK*

**Identifying Gaps and Patient Priorities in First Nations and Métis Myeloma Care**

**Partner:** Myeloma Canada - Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) commitment

**Partnering March:** Saskatoon, SK

## The Ottawa Hospital Myeloma program

Myeloma Canada is also proud to support ongoing research at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute by Drs Alissa Visram and Arleigh McCurdy.

Proceeds supported The Ottawa Hospital's myeloma research database which enables observational research to be performed locally as well as nationally through collaborative efforts with the Canadian Myeloma Research Group database.



**Dr Alissa Visram**

*Ottawa Hospital Research  
Institute, University of Ottawa,  
Ottawa, ON*



**Dr Arleigh McCurdy**

*Ottawa Hospital Research  
Institute, University of Ottawa,  
Ottawa, ON*

Throughout the year, Myeloma Canada and our community of volunteers and donors participate in various fundraising programs that enable and support our investments in science and research, such as our annual Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month campaign, Multiple Myeloma March, Myeloma Canada Ride, Giving Tuesday campaign, donations and monthly, matched, and legacy giving programs. For more information visit [myeloma.ca](https://myeloma.ca).

# Myeloma Canada Research Chair in Multiple Myeloma at Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont

*Improving care, innovating through research, disseminating knowledge.*

Funding provided: \$20,000

The Department of Hematology and Oncology at Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont in Montreal, Quebec has been a centre of excellence in hematology for decades. In 2008, Dr Jean Roy created a research unit on multiple myeloma. Together with Dr Richard LeBlanc, they created an outpatient clinic exclusively dedicated to myeloma patients and patients with related diseases, along with a clinical research unit. This clinic has allowed for faster development of expertise and recruitment for clinical studies.



Dr Jean Roy



Dr Richard LeBlanc

Today, Drs Roy and LeBlanc and their teams are recognized as leaders in allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation in the treatment of hematological cancers, and more specifically, myeloma. Over the years, allogeneic transplantation has improved with better donor selection, better supporting treatments with more effective antibiotics, and the results of the allogeneic transplantation have improved in parallel.

Building on their current experience in allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, the Myeloma Canada Chair's research on multiple myeloma is focusing their research program on developing cellular therapies for myeloma.

**Myeloma Canada initiated the creation of the Myeloma Canada Research Chair in Multiple Myeloma at Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont which was launched in September 2012.**

# 2023 highlights

## Myeloma Canada scientific impact

NEW for 2023

### Pfizer and Myeloma Canada 2023 Quality Improvement Grant Partnership

*New Myeloma Canada and Pfizer  
Canada strategic collaboration*



Funding awarded: \$266,000 over 4 projects

**Approaches to Implement Bispecific Antibodies into Clinical Practice, Increase Awareness and Improve Delivery of Quality of Care for Patients with Multiple Myeloma.**

Also new for 2023, Myeloma Canada entered into a unique, strategic collaboration with Pfizer Canada wherein Pfizer awarded four grants, totalling approximately \$266,000 to support quality improvement projects to advance the quality of care and best practices around treatment for patients with relapsed/refractory myeloma receiving bispecific antibody treatment. Myeloma Canada was the lead organization for the review and evaluation of the grant proposals.

**Winners of the Pfizer and Myeloma Canada 2023  
Quality Improvement Grants:**

#### 1. Dr Mohammed Aljama

Canadian Institute for the Transfer  
of Knowledge, Hamilton, ON

***Multiple Myeloma Bispecific Antibodies  
Clinical Order Set & Quality Improvement***

#### 2. Dr Émilie Lemieux-Blanchard

Groupe des maladies plasmocytaires du  
Québec, Montreal, QC

***Bringing Bispecific T-cell Engager Therapies  
Targeting Multiple Myeloma to the  
Community: Developing an Educational and  
Interactive Program for Hematology Teams in  
Community Centres***

#### 3. Dr Rayan Kaedbey

Montreal Jewish General Hospital. Montreal, QC

***Implementation of Educational Tools and  
Infrastructure to Move Bispecific Therapy  
in Multiple Myeloma from Inpatient to  
Outpatient and Into the Community***

#### 4. Dr Jason Tay

Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary, AB

***A Quality Platform to Provide Access to Safe  
and Quality Care to Patients with Relapsed  
and/or Refractory Multiple Myeloma  
Receiving Bispecific Antibody Treatment –  
MyCare***

## The Dr Andrew R Belch Myeloma Education and Enriched Training (MEET) Grant

*Investing in our future: In recognition of Dr Andrew Belch's outstanding lifetime achievements and mentoring of young researchers*

8 MEET grants awarded

Total amount awarded: \$32,000 (\$4,000/each grant)



Dr Andrew R Belch

In 2019, Myeloma Canada created The Dr Andrew R Belch Myeloma Education and Enriched Training (MEET) Grant to foster the development and participation of qualified young Canadian myeloma investigators at national and international medical/scientific meetings or conferences.

MEET grants are intended to support recipients' conference registration/participation fees, travel costs, and per diem expenses.

**By investing in young researchers to attend and present at international conferences, we are investing in the future of Canadian myeloma research.**

**A total of 8 Dr Andrew R Belch MEET Grants were awarded in 2023:**



**Dr Jean-Sébastien Claveau**  
*Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont,  
Montreal, QC*

***Bone Marrow MRD and Immune  
Microenvironment in Myeloma Long-term  
Progression-free Survivors After Autologous or  
Allogeneic Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation***

Oral abstract presented at the European Society  
for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT),  
April 23-26, 2023



**Melika Bakharzi**  
*Kuchenbauer-Rouhi Lab,  
Terry Fox Laboratory, Vancouver, BC*

***Optimizing the Vk\*MYC Multiple Myeloma Model  
to Investigate Osteolytic Bone Lesions***

Poster abstract presented at the 20<sup>th</sup> International  
Myeloma Society Annual Meeting, Sept. 27-30, 2023



**Afsaneh Panahi**  
*Kuchenbauer-Rouhi Lab,  
Terry Fox Laboratory, Vancouver, BC*

***Identification of Misclassified Multiple Myeloma  
Patient Risk Subgroups with a Novel Biological  
Disease Stratifier***

Poster abstract presented at “How to Diagnose  
and Treat Multiple Myeloma”, April 14-16, 2023



**Lorenzo Lindo**  
*Dr Kevin Hay Lab, Terry Fox  
Laboratory, Vancouver, BC*

***Canadian-made Single Domain Antibody (sdAb)  
BCMA CAR T-Cells for Multiple Myeloma***

Poster abstract presented at the 20<sup>th</sup> International  
Myeloma Society Annual Meeting, Sept. 27-30, 2023



## Dr Andrew R Belch MEET Grants:



**Dory Abelman**

*Pugh/Trudel Lab,  
University of Toronto, Toronto, ON*

### ***Cell-Free DNA from Blood or Bone Marrow as Alternatives to Bone Marrow Cells for Molecular Diagnostics and Monitoring of Multiple Myeloma***

Poster abstract presented at the 65<sup>th</sup> American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting and Exposition, Dec. 9-12, 2023



**Dr Alissa Visram**

*Ottawa Hospital Research  
Institute, University of Ottawa,  
Ottawa, ON*

### ***Comparison of the Efficacy in Clinical Trials Versus Effectiveness in the Real-world of Treatments for Multiple Myeloma: A Population-based Cohort Study***

Oral abstract presented at the 65<sup>th</sup> American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting and Exposition, Dec. 9-12, 2023



**Noémie Leblay, PhD**

*Neri Lab, University of Calgary,  
Calgary, AB*

### ***A High-Risk Subgroup Multiple Myeloma Classification Based on the Detection of PR Minor Subclones***

Poster abstract presented at the 65<sup>th</sup> American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting and Exposition, Dec. 9-12, 2023



**Dr Pallavi Ganguli**

*Queen's University, Kingston, ON*

### ***Primary Care Management Pathways to Reduce Wait Times in Hematology: Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance***

Oral abstract presented at the 65<sup>th</sup> American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting and Exposition, Dec. 9-12, 2023

# Myeloma Consensus Guidelines

*Standardizing myeloma diagnosis, treatment, and management across Canada*

Recognizing the need for medical consensus on the diagnosis, treatment, and management of myeloma in Canada across all provinces, Myeloma Canada led the development of the first Canadian evidence-based treatment guidelines in collaboration with a team of Canadian myeloma experts.

Managed and financed by Myeloma Canada, the Myeloma Consensus Guidelines are a series of peer-reviewed publications that are aimed to improve, standardize, and educate physicians on the management of myeloma in Canada.

## What is the purpose of creating these guidelines?

As there were no unified Canadian national guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of multiple myeloma, there was a need for evidence-based national recommendations.

Although some provinces do have their own guidelines, the Canadian national guidelines take provincial variations in access and funding into consideration. The overarching goal is to provide Canadian clinicians with concise diagnostic recommendations upon which therapeutic decisions can be made. The focus is on relevance, applicability, and the use of the various tests available in routine Canadian practice.

## 1<sup>st</sup> consensus guideline

“Consensus Guidelines on the Diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma and Related Disorders”

Published February 2020 - *Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma & Leukemia*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> consensus guideline

“Management of Myeloma Manifestations & Complications: The Cornerstone of Supportive Care”

Published January 2022 - *Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma & Leukemia*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> consensus guideline

“First Line Treatment of Newly Diagnosed Transplant Ineligible Multiple Myeloma”

Published February 2023 - *Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma & Leukemia*

## 4<sup>th</sup> consensus guideline

“First Line Treatment of Newly Diagnosed Transplant Eligible Multiple Myeloma”

In development in 2023





**SCIENTIFIC  
ROUNDTABLE**  
MAKING MYELOMA MATTER

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Myeloma Canada Scientific Roundtable

November 3 – 4, 2023, Montreal, QC

Thanks to the financial support from industry sponsors, the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Myeloma Canada Scientific Roundtable was, once again, a tremendous success.

**Myeloma Canada was the first, and remains the only**, Canadian organization to bring together top myeloma experts (doctors, researchers, clinicians, and nurses) from the major myeloma treatment and research centres across Canada, with international myeloma specialists, industry partners, and patient representatives, on an annual basis to:

- **discuss the state of clinical trials in Canada** and develop high-impact made-in-Canada clinical trials for patients across the country;
- **exchange highlights of recent myeloma research** and treatment development work;
- **review new myeloma therapies** in the research pipeline;
- **facilitate planning and collaboration** of future Canadian myeloma research.

Presentations and discussions covered a wide array of topics including: ultra-high-risk newly diagnosed multiple myeloma, renal failure in multiple myeloma, the very elderly with multiple myeloma, advanced Stage IIIB AL Amyloidosis, and Waldenström macroglobulinemia.

### Co-chairs:



#### Dr Nizar J Bahlis

Associate Professor, University of Calgary; Charbonneau Cancer Research Institute, Divisions of Hematology and Oncology, Calgary, AB



#### Dr Keith Stewart

Director, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre; VP Cancer, University Health Network; Regional Vice President, Ontario Health; Richard H. Clark Chair, Cancer Medicine; Professor, University of Toronto Toronto, ON



## Highlights: 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Myeloma Canada Scientific Roundtable:

**100+**

attendees

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**66**

myeloma clinicians,  
researchers, and other  
healthcare professionals

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**9**

provinces

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**8**

international  
researchers

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**24**

representatives from  
**14** industry partners

Myeloma Canada Patient Advisory Council,  
patient contributors, Myeloma Canada  
professional team

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**11**

academic presentations

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**9**

presentations from industry

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**4**

clinical trial updates

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Updates from  
Myeloma Canada

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# The Quebec Plasma Cell Dyscrasia Group (GMPQ)

*Partnering for a more informed  
Quebec medical community*



Groupe des maladies  
plasmocytaires du Québec

Myeloma Canada is proud to continue our partnership with the Quebec Plasma Cell Dyscrasia Group (GMPQ), a Quebec-based non-profit organization that brings together physicians who specialize in plasma cell diseases in the province. The GMPQ is focused on sharing the most current information on plasma cell diseases (e.g., monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance [MGUS], smouldering multiple myeloma [SMM], amyloid light-chain [AL] amyloidosis, and myeloma) by providing therapeutic guidelines, training, and publications to the medical community.

The GMPQ's mission is to promote excellence in myeloma care in Quebec by encouraging the dissemination of knowledge and clinical research.

They fulfill their mission in three primary ways:

1. by providing **guidelines** on the treatment of plasma cell diseases to healthcare personnel in Quebec;
2. by providing **training** to healthcare professionals who treat plasma cell diseases in Quebec;
3. by playing a role in advancing **research** on plasma cell diseases.

**In 2023, Myeloma Canada partnered with the GMPQ to help:**

- develop **GMPQ guidelines on the treatment of relapsed/refractory myeloma;**
- update **GMPQ guidelines on the diagnosis and first line treatment of myeloma.**

**Myeloma Canada was also a sponsor of the GMPQ's inaugural scientific conference for medical specialists and pharmacists.**



# Myeloma Canada science and research impact report 2023

Together we are improving quality and length of life for Canadians with myeloma, and getting closer to finding a cure for this challenging disease.

**Your commitment, generosity and support are fueling the way to a hopeful tomorrow for all Canadians impacted by myeloma.**

On behalf of the 11 Canadians diagnosed with myeloma every day and the countless others who have not yet been diagnosed, thank you for making myeloma matter.

**With gratitude and appreciation,**

Martine Elias

Executive Director, Myeloma Canada

 Myeloma Canada – National Page

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For more information, or to make a donation, please visit: **myeloma.ca**

or contact us at:

**contact@myeloma.ca**

Tel.: 514 421-2242

Toll-free: 1-888-798-5771



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