



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 Now Online

The Alliance's Project Cure CRC seeks to fund preclinical and clinical translational research with the potential for high impact on the diagnosis, treatment, or survivorship of colorectal cancer. Proposals will be accepted for Early-Career Investigator Awards, Senior Investigator Awards, Pilot Awards, Team Science Awards, Opportunistic Awards, and Strategic Awards from academic and industry researchers.

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