

American Cancer Society and Yosemite Award \$6 Million in Research Grants to Innovative Cancer Scientists

The Yosemite-American Cancer Society Award grantees are developing research projects to advance the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer

ATLANTA and SAN FRANCISCO, September 10, 2024 – The [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) and [Yosemite](#), an oncology-focused venture capital firm, announced the selection of research grants through their Yosemite-ACS Award totaling more than \$6 million. These inaugural grants were awarded to scientists from institutions across the country and are poised to make an impact in immuno-oncology as well as the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and healthcare delivery.

Yosemite and ACS developed the highly competitive Yosemite-ACS Award to advance groundbreaking research taking place at institutions across the country. Yosemite’s science-first approach incorporates a no-strings-attached grantmaking approach alongside traditional financing. These grants support the ecosystem of grant-funded research that aligns with Yosemite and ACS’s goals to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. Building on the strengths of both organizations will enable fast-paced and impactful support for the scientific research community.

“The American Cancer Society is proud to collaborate with Yosemite to support cutting-edge research,” said [Dr. William Dahut](#), chief scientific officer at the American Cancer Society. “These studies employ highly innovative approaches to bring molecular research, immunotherapy, and even AI and computational machine learning to advance cancer therapies and the cancer patient experience.”

“Investing in grant programs like the Yosemite-ACS Award is part of our flexible capital strategy that allows us to drive cancer research forward,” said [Anna Darbyshire](#), chief operating officer at Yosemite. “Collaborating with an internationally recognized organization and the largest private funder of cancer research in the nation, combined with our hybrid investment approach allows us to effectively translate next-generation scientific research at all phases of development, to pave the path to making cancer non-lethal in our lifetime.”

The investigators selected for the grant awards range from early career scientists to internationally recognized interdisciplinary researchers, all focused on a core, common mission-advancing cancer research. The 2024 awarded research projects include:

- Accelerated discovery and effectiveness of immunotherapy
- Better understanding of the molecular mechanisms of immunity
- The use of AI technology to improve patient care and access to healthcare

The Yosemite-ACS Award will support more scientists in 2025. Together Yosemite and ACS will expand the RFP process with the goal of continuing to fund cancer research projects and provide immediate impact to the scientific community.

Awardees:

University / Institution	Description	Category
Washington University in St. Louis	Engineering GM-CSF as tumor immunotherapy (PI: Cory Berkland, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Weill Medical College of Cornell University	Safeguarding T cell cytoskeletal integrity for improved cancer immunotherapy (PI: Juan Cubillos-Ruiz, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Washington University in St. Louis	Engineering yeast as a novel oral delivery vehicle for immunomodulatory cancer therapies (PI: Gautam Dantas, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy

Washington University in St. Louis	A machine learning based approach to identify dysplasia in blood and bone marrow specimens (PI: Eric Duncavage, MD)	AI models
University of Pennsylvania	Reverse the immunosuppressive vascular microenvironment for cancer immunotherapy (PI: Yi Fan, MD, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	Improving the equity, effectiveness, and actionability of electronic patient-reported outcome feedback systems for clinical cancer symptom management (PI: Christopher Gibbons, PhD)	AI models
The University of Pennsylvania	Restoration of Response to Immunotherapy by Inhibition of Suppressive Myeloid Cells (PI: Saar Gill, MD, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	Re-activating the anti-tumor immune microenvironment while limiting adverse events using a novel directed evolution process (PI: Brian Grindel, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Overcoming therapeutic resistance through cell-specific targeting of the tumor microenvironment with antibody–bottlebrush prodrug conjugates (PI: Jeremiah Johnson, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
The University of California, San Francisco	Bolstering effective anti-tumor phagocytosis through high-throughput design of multifunctional chimeric macrophage receptors (PI: Roarke Kamber, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute	An Open-Source AI Cancer Clinical Trial Matching Platform (PI: Kenneth Kehl, MD, MPH)	AI models
Weill Medical College of Cornell University	Harnessing Innate Immunity for Next-Generation Immuno-Oncology Therapeutics (PI: Dan Landau, MD, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Massachusetts General Hospital	CAR-T targeted delivery of a VEGF-blocking scFv by mesothelin CAR-T cells to enhance anti-tumor activity in solid tumors (PI: Mark Leick, MD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Washington University in St. Louis	An open AI-powered multidisciplinary tumor board platform (PI: Daniel Marcus, PhD)	AI models
Stanford University	Genome editing to create a stem-cell-based broad- spectrum immunotherapy for blood cancer (PI: Matthew Porteus, MD, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center	Identifying actionable molecular mechanisms that modulate T cell infiltration in tumor microenvironments (PI: Anthony Rongvaux, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Massachusetts General Hospital	Epigenetic reprogramming of adoptive cell therapies to bolster tumor-specific memory formation (PI: Debattama Sen, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Washington University in St. Louis	Chromatin accessibility and its role in regulating tumor immunity and metastasis in melanoma (PI: George Souroullas, PhD)	Immuno-oncology / cell therapy
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center	Understanding the grammar of T-cell antigen recognition using fine-tuned large language models (PI: Edus Warren, MD, PhD)	AI models

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About American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 110 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

About Yosemite

Yosemite partners with leading researchers and innovative entrepreneurs working to make cancer non-lethal within our lifetime. The firm deploys capital from early non-profit grantees through late-stage companies to fund advancements across the oncology ecosystem. We leverage our differentiated scientific network to create and finance companies that drive the translation of new therapies in patients and optimize the patient experience. Yosemite aims to meaningfully accelerate the technology, treatments, and standard of care that have the power to improve the health and lives of cancer patients. For more information, please visit: <https://yosemite.co>.

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