American Cancer Society Funds 12 Universities to Grow Pipeline of Diverse Cancer Researchers

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ATLANTA – APRIL 18, 2022 – Diverse perspectives in research are an essential component of driving innovative problem-solving that accelerates new approaches to the prevention and treatment of cancer. To improve diversity in the field of cancer research, the American Cancer Society has awarded funding to 12 universities to implement its Diversity in Cancer Research Internship program. Each university will receive $22,000 - $44,000 to provide training and educational opportunities that encourage underrepresented undergraduate students to pursue biomedical careers. The 12 universities include:

- Yale University School of Medicine
- Emory University
- Case Western Reserve University
- The University of Chicago
- Indiana University
- University of Kentucky Research Foundation
- University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Campus
- University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
- Georgetown University
- University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
- University of Maryland, Baltimore
- Washington University in St. Louis

For 10 weeks, interns will experience the day-to-day world of cancer research, participate in research projects in a collaborative environment with other scientists, and engage in career development and networking activities. Rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors with an interest in STEM, good academic standing and at least a 3.0 GPA may apply. Four interns will be chosen by each university's selection committee.

"Ensuring everyone has the opportunity to prevent cancer and receive high quality treatment and support for cancer is the foundation of our work, but significant disparities in incidence and mortality rates still exist across diverse populations," said Dr. Ellie Daniels, the senior vice president of extramural discovery research for the American Cancer Society. "Conducting equity-focused research to reduce barriers to living a healthy lifestyle and receiving quality care is key to closing this gap. A diverse, inclusive research environment with multiple perspectives at the table provides a more comprehensive approach to effectively addressing these issues."

African Americans and Black people, Hispanics and Latinos, Indigenous people, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are underrepresented in science and research grant funding opportunities. According to data gathered from the National Institute of Health's principal grant program in 2013 and 2018, only 7% of applicants were part of these diverse communities, and in the American Cancer Society's fall 2019 and spring 2020 peer review cycles, diverse applicants were only 6% of the applicant pool.

Made possible by a $5 million grant from the Elizabeth and Phill Gross Family, the Diversity in Cancer Research pilot launched in 2021 with 32 interns at Emory University, Georgetown University, the University of Chicago, the University of Colorado, the University of Kentucky, the University of Maryland, the University of New Mexico, and Washington University. The goal of the program is to enroll 100 interns per year over ten years.

To learn more about how the American Cancer Society is working to improve diversity in health sciences and biomedical research, go to cancer.org/research.

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is on a mission to free the world from cancer. We invest in lifesaving research, provide 24/7 information and support, and work to ensure that individuals in every community have access to cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. For more information, visit cancer.org.