



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NCI Gives the Green Light to New Gastric Cancer Research Program**

**Washington, D.C. – (December 4, 2020)** - This week, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) approved the concept of a new gastric cancer research program that will be dedicated to advancing knowledge of the origins of this deadly cancer. A grant announcement from the NCI will be forthcoming.

Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) met with NCI following the concept's approval and will work with them on the next steps, including raising awareness among the research community about this critical new opportunity.

DDF commends the NCI for recognizing the importance of investing more research dollars into better understanding the cell transformation that leads to gastric cancer. This new program will accelerate the trajectory toward new treatments and better diagnostic tools.

The new research funding opportunities created by this program will also elevate awareness about gastric cancer and encourage more young researchers to pursue this exciting area of cancer research.

This week's announcement promises a future for the nearly 27,000 Americans diagnosed with this devastating disease each year. Today, the overall 5-year survival is just 32 percent, which drops to only five percent for patients diagnosed with late or distant stage gastric cancer.

The new program would not have been possible without the steadfast engagement and perseverance of DDF advocates, including during the annual DDF Capitol Hill Stomach Cancer Advocacy Day. DDF convened the first-ever stomach cancer advocacy day in 2013 and continues to bring the stomach cancer advocacy community together to educate Congress and other policymakers about the need for greater research attention to gastric cancer. Thanks to these efforts, Congress has continued to support the goal to improve survival from gastric cancer. The new NCI research program is a critical step toward meeting that goal.

DDF is an organization of advocates and a community of support for gastric cancer patients and their families. Throughout the years, DDF has suffered the loss of many of its cancer warriors, including young men and women diagnosed too late to survive this disease. This week's approval is welcomed news that is being met with hope and enthusiasm from the gastric cancer patient, physician, and research communities. For more information about DDF, visit [www.DebbiesDream.org](http://www.DebbiesDream.org).

**(More)**

**About Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer**

DDF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about gastric cancer, advancing funding for research, and providing education and support internationally to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF seeks as its ultimate goal to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality.

DDF was founded in 2009 by Debbie Zelman after she was diagnosed with stage IV incurable gastric cancer in 2008 and given only weeks to live. Debbie is considered a pioneer by many for bringing awareness to the plight of stomach cancer patients worldwide and the lack of federal funding for stomach cancer research. She did all of this while receiving hundreds of rounds of chemo, in addition to daily oral treatments. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, almost a decade later, at 50. As a result of her leadership, DDF now has a Scientific and Medical Advisory Board of world-renowned doctors and chapters throughout the United States, Canada, and Germany. DDF strives to continue Debbie's mission and to make her dream a reality. To learn more about DDF, please visit us at [www.DebbiesDream.org](http://www.DebbiesDream.org).

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