



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Mayo Clinic Partners with Debbie's Dream Foundation to Co-host the Gastroesophageal Cancer Educational Symposium**

*Patients, caregivers, and families present the latest information on topics related to gastric cancer research*

**Rochester, MN – (May 21, 2021)** – Mayo Clinic and Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) announce their partnership to host the Gastroesophageal Cancer Educational Symposium on Saturday, July 31, 2021 at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. The event is designed to educate patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare professionals on the latest information related to gastric and esophageal cancer. Topics covered will include genetics, endoscopic treatments, pathology reports, immunotherapy, proton and radiation therapy, circulating tumors, and nutrition and will be shared by leading oncologists, dieticians, and experts. The program will include patient panels throughout, and the information presented will be specific to stomach and esophageal cancer patients but relevant to cancer patients of all types.

The symposium will be led by Dr. Travis E. Grotz and Dr. Shanda Blackmon of Mayo Clinic. Dr. Grotz is a Surgical Oncologist at Mayo Clinic specializing in gastric cancer from minimally invasive robotic surgery to extended resections, including cytoreduction and HIPEC. Dr. Blackmon is a Thoracic Surgeon and Professor at Mayo Clinic specializing in minimally invasive surgery and innovation. Together, they organize the weekly virtual esophagogastric multidisciplinary tumor board conference at Mayo Clinic. Each is excited to help bring this event, in partnership with DDF, to the Mayo Clinic community.

“After running a symptom-focused patient support group for eight years, I realize the importance of connecting patients for healing to take place,” said Dr. Blackmon. “We each will learn from one another during this symposium, and I look forward to hearing from the experts and patients in our program.”

“I am excited for this opportunity to partner with Debbie’s Dream Foundation to provide comprehensive education and support to our community of patients, survivors, and caregivers,” said Dr. Grotz. “I think this will be impactful.”

DDF’s Chief Executive Officer Andrea Eidelman feels honored to partner with Mayo Clinic on this symposium and looks forward to hosting a successful event. “DDF is proud to collaborate with the Mayo Clinic on this Symposium and to bring this educational programming to the Minnesota region,” said Andrea Eidelman. “Coming off the heels of the pandemic, we are excited to gather virtually to share information from the experts on topics that affect those in the stomach cancer community every day.”

The programming will begin at 8:20 a.m. CST, following a complimentary breakfast provided to all in-person attendees. The requirement for masking in health care facilities remains in effect at Mayo Clinic as they continue to monitor up-to-date local and national guidelines. All presentations will also be available virtually via Zoom. Sponsorship for this symposium is provided by National Platinum Sponsors Bristol Myers Squibb and Merck and National Silver Sponsor Astellas Pharma Inc.

**(More)**

To register for this event, visit [www.DebbiesDream.org/events/mayo-clinic-ddf-gastroesophageal-cancer-educational-symposium/](http://www.DebbiesDream.org/events/mayo-clinic-ddf-gastroesophageal-cancer-educational-symposium/).

### 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, as well as to 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, at the age of 50, almost a decade later. 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 and in 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).

### About Mayo Clinic

Mayo Clinic is a non-profit organization committed to innovation in clinical practice, education and research, and to providing compassion, expertise and answers to everyone who needs healing. Visit the [Mayo Clinic News Network](#) for Mayo Clinic News and [An Inside Look at Mayo Clinic](#) for further information.

**FREE Gastroesophageal Cancer Educational Symposium**

MAYO CLINIC

Ceffen Auditorium, Subway Level in Gonda Building, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

**July 31, 2021**

8:00 a.m. - 8:20 a.m. CT  
Registration & Breakfast

8:20 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CT - Programming

**Live & Virtual Programming**  
\*Complimentary Breakfast & Lunch Provided

Travis E. Grotz, MD  
Surgical Oncologist

Shanda Blackmon, MD, MSH  
Professor of Surgery

**Topics Will Include:**  
Genetics, Endoscopic Treatment, Pathology Reports, Immunotherapy, Proton & Radiation Therapy, Circulating Tumors, and Nutrition

**Who Should Attend?**  
Patients, Caregivers, Family Members, and Healthcare Providers

**REGISTER ONLINE:** <http://bit.ly/Mayo-ClinicDDF>

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**Photo One:** Flyer for the Mayo Clinic and DDF Gastroesophageal Cancer Educational Virtual Symposium led by Dr. Travis E. Grotz, Dr. Shanda Blackmon from Mayo Clinic will lead the event as Symposium Co-chairs.

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