



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Debbie's Dream Foundation Announces \$250,000 Research Grant to Advance Innovative Treatment for Gastric Cancer Patients with Malignant Ascites**

*The grant will support groundbreaking research to improve treatment options for advanced gastric cancer*

**Fort Lauderdale, FL – December 31, 2024** – Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF), a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness, funding research, and supporting stomach cancer patients worldwide, is proud to announce a \$250,000 research grant to Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). This funding will advance a groundbreaking study to address one of the toughest challenges facing gastric cancer patients—treatment resistance caused by malignant ascites.

Malignant ascites, an advanced complication of stomach cancer, occur when fluid builds up in the abdomen, making the disease more difficult to treat and more challenging for patients to manage. Led by Dr. Samuel Klempner, an oncologist and recognized expert in gastric cancer treatment, and Dr. Alexandra-Chloé Villani, a leading immune system researcher, the study will focus on finding new ways to improve treatment outcomes for patients facing this complication.

The team at MGH is studying how the ascites fluid interferes with the body's immune system, making treatments like immunotherapy less effective. By understanding the mechanisms that allow cancer cells to resist treatment, the researchers aim to identify new therapies to better target and overcome these barriers.

“This research offers real hope for gastric cancer patients who currently have very few options,” said Andrea Eidelman, Chief Executive Officer of DDF. “We are excited to support this innovative project and remain committed to advancing research that can transform patient lives.”

The MGH team will build on early findings that may be key to improved treatments. By testing new approaches and combinations of therapies, they aim to move these discoveries quickly toward clinical trials, offering much-needed solutions to patients who are out of options.

This \$250,000 grant is part of DDF's ongoing commitment to funding groundbreaking research that drives progress in the fight against gastric cancer. Since its founding, DDF has invested over \$2 million in research and continues to provide hope and resources to patients and families worldwide.

For more information about this research or Debbie's Dream Foundation's programs and initiatives, 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 research funding, and providing international education and support to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF's ultimate goal is 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 and daily oral treatments. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, at 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, Germany, and Japan. DDF strives to continue Debbie's mission to make her dream a reality. To learn more, visit [www.DebbiesDream.org](http://www.DebbiesDream.org).

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