More than a decade ago, we annually funded a small patient advocate working on behalf of patients with advanced-stage cancer in our SWOG community. We are pleased to report, we continue to do this with minimal administrative costs, which eventually becomes an integral part of the everyday work of the network. And, I’m also pleased to report, we have increased our investment in patient advocates and patient research advocates, to serve the rapidly growing patient community that is more engaged than ever in clinical research and trials, while initiatives include some of our long-term efforts to advance group priorities like diversity and inclusion.

Research awards fund members' unique projects. These are just a few of our newest funding awards, and they fall into the largest of the categories shown in the pie chart below - research awards and priority initiatives. Research awards fund members' unique projects, helping to advance their work behind the scenes.

As a non-profit dedicated to advancing the best cancer science, we enjoy a special vantage point at the bleeding edge of clinical research. Does it always work as planned? Of course not. But the reality is, for every patient who doesn’t benefit, there’s another who does. Our job is to keep moving forward, to keep challenging the status quo, to always be exploring, always learning.

I’d like to spend some time today addressing our efforts over the last year to make our research more meaningful to patients, and to make patients more meaningful to our research. As we’ve continued this work, we’ve been struck by how thepatient community is more engaged than ever in clinical research and trials.

We opened the groundbreaking Pragmatica-Lung, completed Stage 1 of our ImmunoMATCH pilot, published a hugely successful palliative care study, and are on the cusp of activating myeloMATCH. With a return to historic numbers of trial applications, we expect many more important results to come.

The Sky’s the Limit

I’ve always said that the sky’s the limit. We know the value of a diverse and inclusive environment. And we’re not alone. We know we have a role to play here. And we’re not alone. As we continue to make progress in this area, I would like to acknowledge that we’ve seen exponential growth in the number of underrepresented groups enrolled in SWOG studies.

And she’s right. Thanks to the incredible minds of our leaders and staff, we’ve been able to make significant progress in the areas of diversity and inclusion. We’ve also seen exponential growth in the number of underrepresented groups enrolled in SWOG studies.

We also observed a 10% increase in the number of underrepresented groups enrolled in SWOG studies this year.

In welcoming new co-chairs, we are excited to announce the launch of a new electronic co-chair initiative. The goal of this initiative is to build over time, bringing new and more diverse perspectives to the group when Dr. Charles Blanke’s term ends.

The co-chair initiative also includes two rounds of training for next year’s co-chairs. Barbara Segarra-Vazquez, DHSc, now sharing the leadership role as Dr. Kornblith’s term ends, will guide this effort, which has been in development for much of the clinical care, why are we so hesitant to get them more integrated into our daily work? And the payoff is real, and it’s measured in years saved and improved for patients.

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