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New Tool Helps Melanoma Patients Explore Cutting-Edge Treatment Options
-Tool uses individual diagnosis information to give patients insights into all their treatment options-

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Most melanoma patients never hear about the most cutting edge treatments available to them. That’s because some of the most innovative approaches are available only through clinical trials and too few patients are ever told they are eligible for a trial.

To close this knowledge gap, the Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) has announced the launch of a new resource for melanoma patients. The online clinical trial finder is a free and confidential way for people with melanoma to evaluate their own individual diagnoses and treatment history against available clinical trials.

“It’s no understatement that people with melanoma have a better chance of surviving when they know about all their treatment options. But many people with melanoma don’t even realize that clinical trials are an option for them and they’re never even told about what’s available,” said Tim Turnham, executive director for the MRF. “Enrolling in a clinical trial might not be the right choice for some patients, but at minimum they should be given the information they need to know if it’s an option.”

Clinical trials are often the standard of care for melanoma patients as few effective treatment options exist for advanced stages of the disease. If not caught early, melanoma is known to be the most deadly of all skin cancers. It can be successfully removed and monitored by regular skin screenings in its early stages. However, the median lifespan for patients with advanced melanoma is less than one year.

In 2000, a study found that approximately 85 percent of cancer patients weren’t aware that participation in clinical trials was an option, and 75 percent said they would have been willing to enroll in one if only they had known.†

“If you have advanced melanoma and your physician has not discussed with you your clinical trial options, you need to find a new doctor,” continued Turnham. “At the MRF, we’re doing all we can to help people fight this terrible disease and having a powerful information tool like this clinical trial finder will go a long way in helping patients get the best, most advanced treatments.”
In partnership with EmergingMed, the clinical trial finder better equips patients to take control of their diagnosis. The tool can be accessed by calling 1-800-517-2218 or online through the MRF’s website: www.melanoma.org.

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About Melanoma
Melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, is one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States and can strike men and women of all ages, all races and skin types. In fact, with a one in 50 lifetime risk of developing melanoma, nearly 69,000 Americans are expected to be diagnosed with the disease in 2010, resulting in 8,700 deaths or one person every hour. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25- to 29-years-old and the second most common cancer in adolescents and young adults 15- to 29-years-old.

About Melanoma Research Foundation
The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is the largest independent, national organization devoted to melanoma in the United States. Committed to the support of medical research in finding effective treatments and eventually a cure for melanoma, the MRF also educates patients and physicians about prevention, diagnosis and the treatment of melanoma. The MRF is an active advocate for the melanoma community, helping to raise awareness of this disease and the need for a cure. The MRF’s website is the premier source for melanoma information seekers. More information is available at www.melanoma.org.