



Competitive Research Grant Program

Equitable Care of Metastatic Breast Cancer (mBC) Patients: A Phased Approach to Understanding and Addressing Healthcare Disparities for People of Color

Request for Proposals

June 4, 2021

I. Introduction

Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation and Pfizer Global Medical Grants are collaborating to offer a research grant funding opportunity to promote the advancement of scientific knowledge concerning equitable care of metastatic breast cancer (mBC) patients. This research grant program will employ data-driven frameworks to define and address inequities in the delivery of care and outcomes for patients of color with metastatic breast cancer. This program is aligned with the theme of the 2021 ASCO Annual Meeting; Equity: Every Patient. Every Day. Everywhere.

Conquer Cancer is the lead organization for the review and evaluation of applications. Grant funding will be provided directly from Pfizer. Collectively, up to \$1.5 million USD is available to fund approximately 10 research projects under this RFP. The grant term is for one year.

Successful applicants to this RFP will be expected to share the initial results of their research at a future grantee meeting to be convened by Conquer Cancer in late 2022. They will also be invited to submit applications to an anticipated Pfizer-funded RFP in early 2023 to implement any of the potential solutions to the care disparities uncovered during the initial project term.

About Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation

Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation, funds research for every cancer, every patient, everywhere. In 1964, seven oncologists created the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), now a global network of nearly 45,000 cancer professionals. As ASCO's foundation, we support groundbreaking research and education so both doctors and patients have the resources they need. For more information, visit CONQUER.ORG Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation will be the scientific collaborator for this grant mechanism.

About Pfizer Global Medical Grants

The mission of Pfizer Global Medical Grants is to accelerate the translation of science into quality patient care through independent grants, partnerships, and collaborations. Pfizer Global Medical Grants supports the global healthcare community's independent initiatives (e.g., research, quality improvement or education) to improve patient outcomes in areas of unmet medical need that are aligned with Pfizer's medical and/or scientific strategies. For all Investigator Sponsored Research (ISRs) and general research grants, the grant requester (and ultimately the grantee) is responsible for the design, implementation, sponsorship, and conduct of the independent initiative supported by the grant, including compliance with any regulatory requirements.

II. Scope

Metastatic Breast Cancer (mBC) is a disease that requires intensive treatment and supportive care. The potential life expectancy and quality of life are significantly different for black versus white patients. According to the American Cancer Society, for the period 2013-2017, in the United States, the breast cancer death rate was 40% higher in black women versus white women.¹

The causes of such racial disparities are complex and include longstanding systemic inequities. Racial bias or prejudices exist among individuals, groups, and institutions, and the resulting inequities can be subtle and difficult to fully define.² Moreover, these inequities are not limited to treatment, but also supportive care, such as psychosocial and palliative care.

Achieving health equity for cancer care requires all stakeholders in the community to work collaboratively to overcome the historical momentum and existing social structures that contribute to disparate outcomes.³ This includes healthcare providers understanding the inequities that are prevalent in their care delivery systems.

The research areas of interest for this RFP are:

- Understanding racial disparities in the access to and delivery of treatment and supportive care, including psychosocial and palliative care, for patients with metastatic breast cancer.
- Understanding racial disparities in the outcomes for patients with metastatic breast cancer.
- Systematic analyses of disparities within care delivery systems and communities.

The overall aim is to identify disparities in delivery of care and treatment outcomes for patients of color with metastatic breast cancer, based on a specific understanding of the variables that may be related to the inequity. Variables can include socioeconomic factors, as well as other variables, as identified through research, of a given care delivery system and the communities served by the system. Studies supported by this program should support models to facilitate similar analyses aimed at identifying inequities in other health care systems.

It is anticipated that data from the care delivery system will be analyzed in concert with city, county, state and other health and social agency data to elucidate the geographic patterns and independent variables impacting delivery of care and outcomes.

Within the data-driven research framework, sites might explore:

- Why are metastatic breast cancer (mBC) patients in health systems not receiving equitable treatment and/or supportive care?
- How do variables like income, home community, geography, or origin of care (which clinic or health system is the entry point to the network) influence the care and treatment of mBC patients?
- Does the quality of care change based upon the age of the patient or the source of payment (Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, self-pay)?
- How does explicit or implicit bias impact the delivery of care at the individual, group or institutional level?

Collaboration with community agencies, advocacy organizations and organizations aligned with the mission to eliminate racial health care disparities is expected to help inform the research studies and understand healthcare disparities for mBC patients of color. Investigators are encouraged to engage with these groups in the development of this proposal, as well as the design and implementation of potential solutions.

Achieving health equity will require the engagement of the patients who will be impacted by this work. When advocates partner with researchers they can improve patient outcomes and ultimately benefit all patients with cancer. *All proposals must ensure that the research reflects the needs of patients with mBC, particularly those from underserved communities, and must be developed with the participation of a patient advocate.*

Please note that basic and translational (e.g. pre-clinical) studies addressing disparities in mBC outcomes, as well as clinical trials, are not appropriate for this funding opportunity.

III. Framework:

The expected results of the initial research grant funding are three-fold. 1) Public presentation and publication of the findings to increase awareness and the universal understanding of the causes of racial disparities in the care of patients with mBC. 2) The research is expected to result in insights into possible solutions to address and potentially eliminate the inequities identified. 3) Dissemination of approaches and frameworks that healthcare systems can employ to assess inequities in care.

Conquer Cancer and Pfizer intend to offer a future round of funding through an invited-only RFP to organizations successfully completing their initial research projects. The funding is intended to be available for Quality Improvement projects or Educational initiatives to help solve some of the issues identified.

Conquer Cancer and Pfizer have developed this RFP with a formalized review procedure to accept applications and select the research proposals of highest scientific merit. Pfizer and Conquer Cancer will initially review proposals to determine if applicants meet eligibility criteria and the proposed projects are in the scope of the RFP.

Conquer Cancer will convene a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) composed of subject matter experts who will perform an independent and confidential peer review of applications. All eligible applications will be reviewed by a biostatistician and patient advocate.

This RFP is open to investigators from all US institutions with a focus on Academic Cancer Centers, Healthcare Delivery Networks, and large Community Cancer Centers or Hospitals. Collaboration between institutions and related community partners is strongly encouraged, to foster the interactive sharing of knowledge and expertise, and to utilize the combined strengths of members.

IV. Requirements

Date RFP Issued:	June 4, 2021
Clinical Area:	Oncology – Metastatic Breast Cancer
Applicant Eligibility Criteria:	<p>To be eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution and principal investigator (PI) must be based in the United States. • Eligible institutions include Academic Cancer Centers, Healthcare Delivery Networks, and large Community Cancer Centers or Hospitals. • Only organizations are eligible to receive grants, not individuals or physician-owned medical group practices. • The applicant (PI) must have a medical or postdoctoral degree (MD, PhD, or equivalent), an advanced nursing degree (BSN with a MS/PhD), or a degree in Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, or Social Work. • The principal investigator (PI) must be affiliated with the applicant institution

<p>Budget:</p>	<p>The estimated total available funding for this RFP is \$1,500,000. Approximately 10 projects will be awarded funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual projects requesting up to \$150,000 over one year will be considered. • The maximum indirect (overhead) rate is 28% and must be included in the total grant request amount. • Amount requested may not exceed the budget limit set forth in the RFP and the budget submitted must be within fair market value. • No funding for capital equipment is allowed. • Travel costs directly related to conducting the project or presenting the results may be included in the budget.
<p>Estimated Key Dates:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP release date: 6/4/2021 • Grant Application due date: 8/4/2021 Please note the deadline is 23:59 Eastern Standard Time (e.g. New York, GMT -5). • Anticipated Grant Award Notification Date: 11/1/21 <p>Grants will be distributed following a fully executed agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated Project Start and End Dates: 1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022 • Grantee Meeting to take place in late 2022 to share progress and ideas with other researchers in the cohort. • The RFP for second phase funding is anticipated to be available in early 2023. Only organizations that successfully completed their initial research projects will be invited to participate.

<p>How to Apply:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please go to www.cybergrants.com/pfizer/Research and sign in. First-time users should click “Create your password”. • In the application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For the question “Are you replying to a Request for Proposal as part of the Competitive Grant Program?” select Yes ○ Select the following Competitive Grant Program Name: 2021 Oncology: Equitable Care of Metastatic Breast Cancer (mBC) Patients ○ Select the following Primary Area of Interest: Oncology – Breast ○ Complete all required sections of the online application and upload your project proposal (see Appendix) in the Proposal/Protocol field. • If you encounter any technical difficulties with the website, please click the “Technical Questions” link at the bottom of the page. <p>IMPORTANT: Be advised applications submitted after the due date or exceeding the project end dates will not be reviewed.</p>
<p>Review Criteria</p>	<p>Applications will be peer reviewed based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength of the proposal, feasibility and likelihood of identifying root causes of racial disparities in mBC delivery of care and outcomes. • Involvement of community systems and organizations involved in addressing racial justice in health care • Appropriateness, feasibility, and adequacy of the proposed study design. • Availability of environmental and institutional resources to support the proposed project. • Prior research experience and accomplishments of the applicant.
<p>Questions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have questions regarding this RFP, please direct them in writing to Conquer Cancer Scientific Review Officer, Andrew L. Smith, PhD (Andrew.Smith@conquer.org) or Pfizer Grant Officer, Dewayne Brumlow (Dewayne.Brumlow@Pfizer.com) with the subject line 2021 Equitable Care of mBC Patients, 06.04.21 • Please click here to view Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Competitive Grant Program

Grant Agreements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your grant is approved, your institution will be required to enter into a written grant agreement with Pfizer. Please click here to view the core terms of the agreement. • Pfizer has drafted the terms of these agreements to be balanced and reasonable and to further the goals of both parties. Negotiating grant agreements requires significant resources, so please ensure that your institution (including your legal department) is able and willing to abide by these terms before proceeding with submission of your application as they will need to be accepted in their entirety.
Mechanism by which Applicants will be Notified:	<p>All applicants will be notified via email by the anticipated dates noted above.</p> <p>Applicants may be asked for additional clarification, if needed, during the review period.</p>

References

1. American Cancer Society. Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2019-2020. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, Inc. p.9
2. AMA’s Organizational Strategic Plan to Embed Racial Justice and Advance Health Equity, 2021–2023, p.16
3. Patel et al., Cancer Disparities and Health Equity: A Policy Statement from the American Society of Clinical Oncology, *J Clin Oncol* 38:3439-3448, 2020

Appendix A

General RFP Submission Requirements

Project Proposals/Protocols should be single-spaced using Calibri 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Note there is a 12-page limit exclusive of references. Please include the following:

Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the main goal of the study and the study population (if applicable). Provide a detailed definition that is directly linked to the primary objective.
Assessment of Need for the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This should reflect your study rationale. Provide a brief description of the medical/scientific question and the rationale of how this study addresses the question.
Target Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the primary audience(s) targeted for this project. For studies focused on a specific patient population, please specify the relevant age, gender and other demographic information.• Also indicate whom you believe will directly benefit from the project outcomes. Describe the overall population size as well as the size of your sample population.
Project Design and Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe concisely the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals. Please include any relevant inclusion/exclusion criteria, analysis plans, and statistical plans.
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain what measures you have taken to assure that this project idea is original and does not duplicate other projects. Describe how this project builds upon existing work, pilot projects, or ongoing projects developed either by your institution or other institutions related to this project.
Evaluation and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specify type and frequency of safety, efficacy, and/or outcome measures. Please describe how disparities will be defined and identified within the datasets. Also indicate the method(s) used to assess measures.• Provide a publication plan describing intended submission of abstracts to (a) congress(es) or intended submission of (a) publication(s) to peer-reviewed journals. All publications must follow ICH guidelines.
Patient Advocate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please describe how a patient advocate was involved in developing the grant application, explain the role a patient advocate will have during the conduct of the research project, and how the project will benefit from the engagement of an

	<p>advocate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Patient Advocate Plan should be written in a way that is understood by people who do not have scientific or medical backgrounds.
Anticipated Project Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an anticipated timeline for your project including project start/end dates.
Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is any additional information you feel Pfizer should be aware of concerning the importance of this project, please summarize here. • Early-career applicants: Letter(s) of support from mentor(s) and collaborators describing how the award will advance the applicant’s career. • The applicant is highly encouraged to upload a Letter of Support from a Patient Advocate.
Organization Detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This information is used to assess the capability of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed. Identify the facilities to be used [laboratory, animal, clinical and “other”]. If appropriate, indicate their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity and extent of availability to the project.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibliography of relevant references.