

Annual Report



Fiscal Year 2025

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

wacarefund.org



Funding Bold Ideas in Cancer Research

Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund, Washington's cancer research endowment, invests in public and private entities to promote cancer research in Washington. Through research grants and strategic partnerships, **CARE Fund** aims to improve health outcomes by advancing transformational research in the prevention and treatment of cancer.

The **Washington State Legislature** created **CARE Fund** in 2015, and this public investment in cancer research is maximized by private and other non-state matching funds.

The work of **CARE Fund** would not be possible without the support from Washington State donors and contributing partners.

Dear friends, colleagues, and partners,

This year marks a major milestone for **Andy Hill CARE Fund**: a decade since our founding by the Washington State Legislature and former Governor Jay Inslee. As Washington's cancer research endowment over the past ten years, CARE Fund's work has grown in both scope and impact. Residents of Washington can be proud that our state continues to be a national leader in support of cancer research.

From July 2024 through June 2025, CARE Fund entered a new phase where, in addition to our twice per year grantmaking opportunities, we expanded co-funding partnerships with other philanthropies. I am pleased to share several of this year's organizational highlights:

- CARE Fund invested in co-funding partnerships with other cancer research grantmakers, including awarding a second round of **Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Awards** to accelerate ovarian cancer research led by Washington scientists (see page 8).
- In another collaborative effort, CARE Fund partnered with **Public Health – Seattle & King County, Cannabis, Tobacco, and Vapor Prevention Program** on a research project to assess unmet needs related to youth vaping, smoking, cessation, and prevention. Together, we are working with communities developing local strategies for tackling these challenges.
- Through our first cycle of **Implementation and Outcomes Research Grants**, the CARE Board awarded over \$10 million to public and private entities to translate promising research and scientific discoveries into effective interventions, tools, devices, technologies, or therapeutics related to cancer (see page 9).
- CARE Fund partnered with the **University of Washington, Washington State Department of Health**, and community-based organizations to create an outreach and engagement plan with the goal of increasing diversity in cancer clinical trials.
- The state legislature passed legislation empowering CARE Fund's Board of Directors to select a program administrator, enabling CARE Fund to be more nimble and effective in addressing the needs of Washington's cancer research community.
- The Board of Directors welcomed two new Governor-appointed Board members, broadening the Board's professional and geographic diversity to shape and strengthen CARE Fund's future strategic direction. In addition, the Board appointed an advisory committee of individuals with nationally recognized expertise in the scientific, clinical, ethical, commercial, and regulatory aspects of cancer research, prevention, and care to develop recommendations that informed CARE Fund's strategic plan.
- CARE Fund convened grantees and their teams to increase grantee and partner engagement, foster collaboration and spark new partnerships across the cancer research community.

The accomplishments in this report belong to a wide range of grantees, partners, advocates, and supporters. The CARE Board is deeply grateful for the dedication, creativity, and resilience of Washington's cancer research community—true champions of science whose work echoes far beyond our state's borders.

We are also mindful of the legacy and inspiration provided by the late State Senator Andy Hill, whose vision and commitment continue to guide our work and remind us of what is at stake.

Thank you for your commitment to this cause. Together, we are investing in hope, advancing discovery, and building a healthier future for Washington.



With gratitude,

Elizabeth R. Lawlor, MD, PhD | Chair, CARE Fund Board of Directors

All Grants and Cancer Research Investments Made, Cumulative Years

This section includes the number and dollar amounts of grants awarded (per RCW 43.348.050(5)).

From its inception through June 30, 2025, **CARE Fund** has awarded more than \$68 million in grants and investments to advance cancer research across Washington. These investments span a broad spectrum of categories.



\$68,022,124

In Total Investments and Grants Awarded to Date



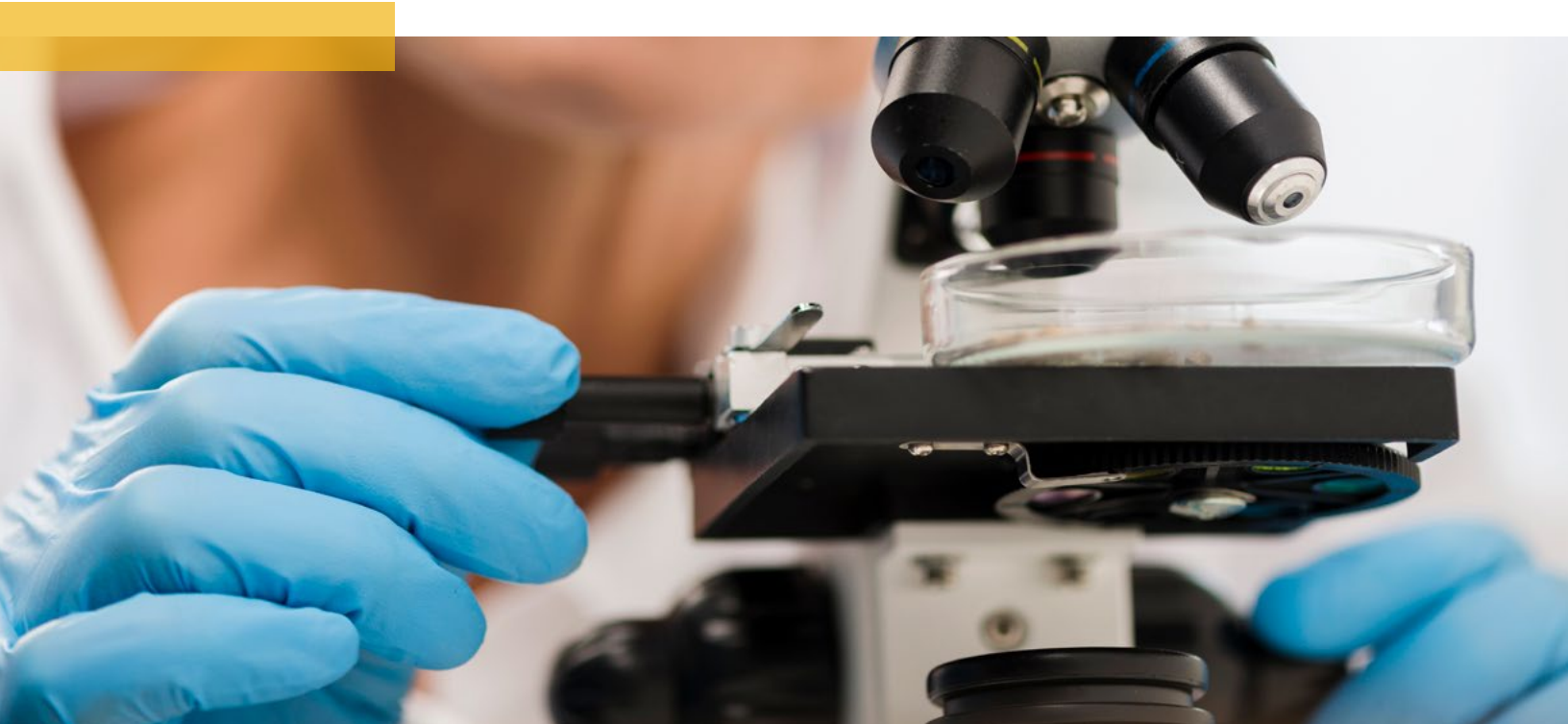
NUMBER AND AMOUNT OF GRANTS AND OTHER INVESTMENTS

Fiscal Year	Grants and Other Investments	Total Awards	Total Amounts
2025	Breakthrough Research	Continued Funding	\$836,731
	Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Award	2	\$300,000
	Implementation and Outcomes Research	10	\$10,256,298
	Total	12	\$11,393,029
2024	Public Health Seattle & King County Partnership	1	\$500,000
	Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Award	2	\$200,000
	Total	3	\$700,000
2023	Breakthrough Research	Continued Funding	\$3,421,555
	Breakthrough Seed Funding	6	\$2,277,936
	Distinguished Researchers	3	\$1,497,519
	Emergent Issues in Public Health	1	\$249,993
	Inclusion and Diversity in Cancer Clinical Trials	6	\$5,423,443
	Life Science Start Up and Development	16	\$16,591,772
	Population Health	5	\$2,246,908
	Shared Resources and Infrastructure	8	\$7,670,750
	Total	45	\$39,379,876
2022	Breakthrough Research	Continued Funding	\$3,000,000
	Distinguished Researchers	4	\$1,845,000
	Total	4	\$4,845,000
2021	Breakthrough Research	Continued Funding	\$3,000,000
	COVID-19 Response	3	\$299,907
	Population Health	2	\$397,370
	Total	5	\$3,697,277
2020	Breakthrough Research	Continued Funding	\$1,356,961
	COVID-19 Response	5	\$499,981
	Distinguished Researchers	1	\$500,000
	Total	6	\$2,356,942
2019	Breakthrough Research	2	\$1,150,000
	Distinguished Researchers	5	\$2,500,000
	Total	7	\$3,650,000
2018	Distinguished Researchers	4	\$2,000,000
	Total	4	\$2,000,000
Total Grants Awarded to Date: 6/30/2025		86	\$68,022,124

Grants, Grantees and Other Investments

Current and Prior Fiscal Year

This section includes the number and dollar amounts of grants as well as grantees for the prior year (per RCW43.348.050(5)). Grants and awards represent those made in FY 2024 and FY 2025.



In FY 2024 and FY 2025, CARE Fund continued to broaden its impact through both direct grants and innovative co-funding partnerships.

In FY 2024 CARE Fund partnered with the Rivkin Center to co-invest in ovarian cancer research through the Rivkin Center/CARE Fund Awards, and with Public Health – Seattle & King County on a project addressing youth smoking and vaping prevention. These co-funding partnerships leverage non-state resources for cancer research by collaborating with other grantmakers and organizations.

FY 2025 marked the launch of CARE Fund’s new Implementation and Outcomes Research opportunity, resulting in the first awards in this category to projects focused on advancing the application and evaluation of cancer research discoveries.

GRANTS AWARDED AND CANCER PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENTS

Fiscal Year 2024

Program	Grantee Organization, Principal Investigator, and Proposal	Research Area (may include more than the listed area)	Cancer Type	Total Awarded
Intergovernmental Agreements	Public Health Seattle & King County Cannabis, Tobacco, and Vapor Prevention Program Research Partnership	Prevention	Multiple Types	\$500,000
Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Award	Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center (Holly Harris, MPH, ScD) Identifying Ovarian Cancer Risk Factors Among Women with Endometriosis	Prevention	Ovarian	\$100,000
Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Award	University of Washington (Elizabeth Swisher, MD) Overcoming Barriers to Genetic Testing for Hereditary Ovarian Cancer Risk, a Key Step Toward Prevention	Prevention	Ovarian	\$100,000

Please note that some grantees may have received awards for multiple projects. Dollar amounts reflect only CARE Fund’s grant, excluding matching funds from other sources.

\$700,000

Total Partnership Investments in Fiscal Year 2024



\$11,393,029

Total Awards and Partnership Investments in Fiscal Year 2025



GRANTS AWARDED AND CANCER PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENTS

Fiscal Year 2025

Program	Grantee Organization, Principal Investigator, and Proposal	Research Area (may include more than the listed area)	Cancer Type	Total Awarded
Breakthrough Research	University of Washington (André Lieber, MD, PhD) <i>Recombinant Epithelial Junction Opener Protein for Enhanced Drug Penetration in Epithelial Tumors</i>	Treatment	Ovarian	\$836,731
Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Award	Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center (Megan Shen, PhD) <i>Adaptation of Helping Ovarian Cancer Patients COPE (HOPE) for Clinician Burnout</i>	Cancer Control, Survivorship, and Outcomes	Ovarian	\$150,000
Rivkin Center / CARE Fund Award	University of Washington (Mary L. “Nora” Disis, MD) <i>A Vaccine to Prevent Ovarian Cancer Metastatic Spread</i>	Treatment	Ovarian	\$150,000

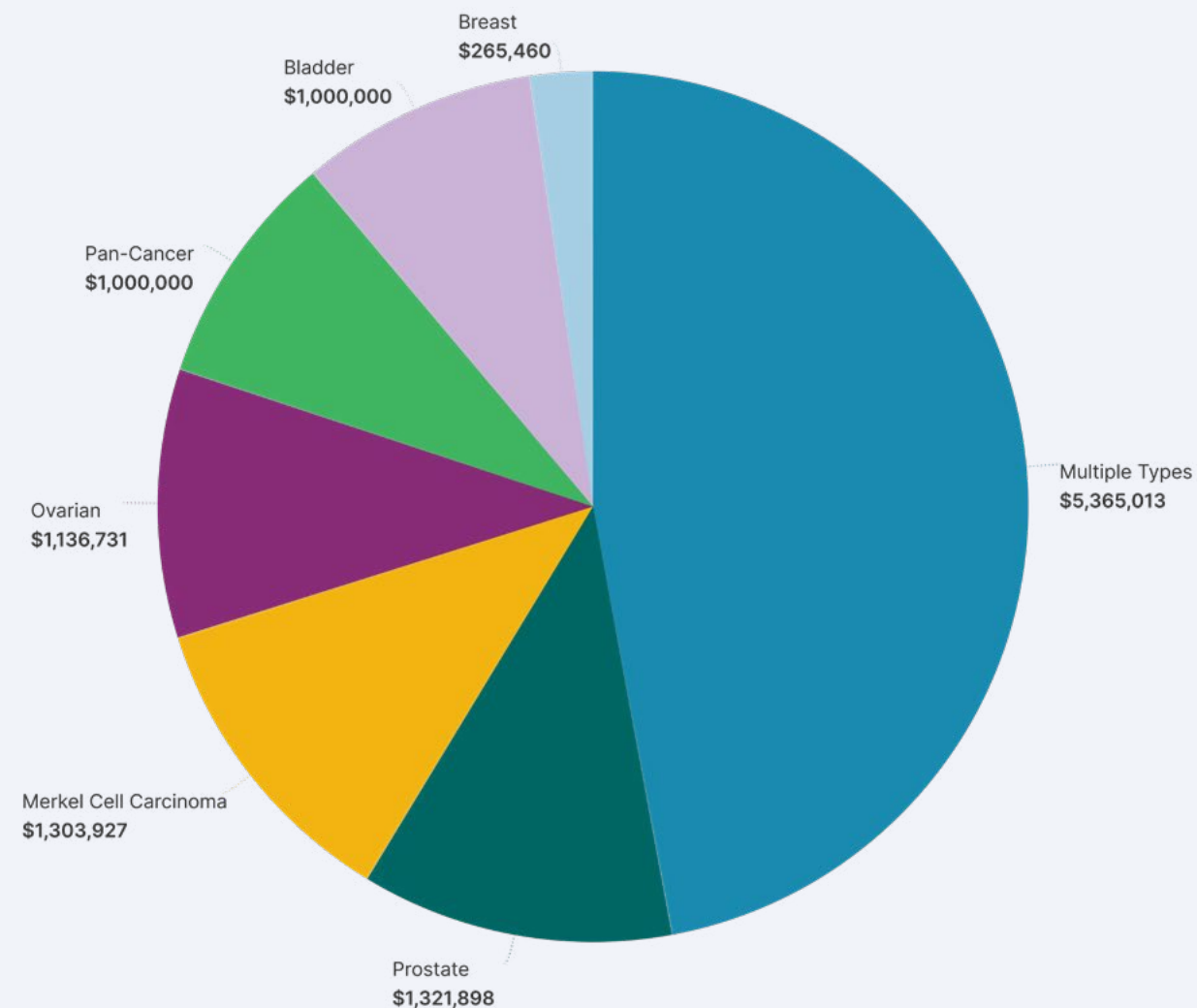
GRANTS AWARDED AND CANCER PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENTS: IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES RESEARCH

Fiscal Year 2025

Grantee Organization, Principal Investigator, and Proposal	Research Area (may include more than the listed area)	Cancer Type	Total Awarded
Dotquant, LLC (Hongyan Liu, PhD) <i>A Three-in-One HER Family Targeted RNA Drug for Breast Cancer</i>	Treatment	Breast	\$265,460
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center (Heather Greenlee, ND, PhD, MPH; Amanda Fretts, PhD, MPH) <i>Partnering with Washington State Tribal Communities to Develop Culturally-Tailored Nutrition Resources and Reduce Cancer Health Disparities</i>	Prevention	Multiple Types	\$1,499,378
Seattle Children’s Research Institute (Jim Olson, MD, PhD) <i>Converting an Immunotherapy Resistance Mechanism into a Vulnerability Using Slow-Release Local Immunotherapy</i>	Treatment	Multiple Types	\$1,479,768
Seattle Children’s Research Institute (Jonathan Tang, PhD) <i>Advanced Platform for Developing Conditionally Stable Sensors and Effectors for Cancer Applications</i>	Early Detection, Diagnosis, and Prognosis	Pan-Cancer	\$1,000,000
Talus Bioscience, Inc. (Alex Federation, PhD) <i>Development of a Direct Inhibitor of the Brachyury Transcription Factor for Chordoma and Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer</i>	Treatment	Multiple Types	\$500,000
University of Washington (Xiaohu Gao, PhD) <i>RNA Therapeutics: Bridging the Gap Between Research and Translation</i>	Treatment	Prostate	\$1,321,898
University of Washington (Peggy Hannon, PhD, MPH) <i>Workplace Cancer Prevention and Screening: Scaling Up Connect to Wellness for Employees in Low-Wage Industries Across Washington State</i>	Prevention	Multiple Types	\$708,432
University of Washington (Paul Nghiem, MD, PhD) <i>Advancing Merkel Cell Carcinoma Management: Improved Recurrence Detection and New Approaches for Immunotherapy-Refractory Disease</i>	Treatment	Merkel Cell Carcinoma	\$1,303,927
University of Washington (Sarah Psutka, MD, MSc; Cindy Lin, MD, FACS, FAAPMR) <i>Phase II Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial evaluating a Scalable, Personalized Home-Based Activity Intervention with ExerciseRx in Survivors with Nonmuscle-Invasive Bladder Cancer: The EMPOWER Trial</i>	Cancer Control, Survivorship, and Outcomes Research	Bladder	\$1,000,000
Wayfinder Biosciences, Inc. (David Sparkman-Yager, PhD) <i>Developing Novel Small Molecule Therapeutics for MYC-Driven Cancers Using Wayfinder Biosciences’ Proprietary RNA-Drugging Platform</i>	Treatment	Multiple Types	\$1,177,435

TOTAL AWARDED BY CANCER TYPE

Fiscal Year 2025



“**Andy Hill CARE Fund** has moved cancer research forward and helped attract top talent to innovate and save lives. Sen. Andy Hill was an influential leader in Washington state, and his legacy lives on through this critical endowment. As the future of federal funding for scientific research continues to be uncertain, Washington will keep investing in lifesaving advancements.”



**Governor
Bob Ferguson**

CARE Fund Impact

This section includes the benefits to Washington of CARE Fund’s programs to date (per RCW 43.348.040(5)).

CARE Fund benefits Washington state, its people, and communities through strategic investments in cancer research. Since its inception in 2015, **CARE Fund** has awarded over \$68 million in grants and other investments, supporting a wide range of initiatives that advance scientific discovery, foster collaboration, build workforce capacity, and drive economic growth. The following impact areas highlight key achievements and ongoing efforts to promote cancer research across the state.



To expand its impact for the people of Washington, **CARE Fund** is proud to be a founding partner of the **Cancer Action Plan of Washington**. This statewide coalition, organized by the **Washington Department of Health**, developed and will monitor **Washington’s 5-Year Comprehensive Cancer Plan** for 2025-2030. The Plan aims to address the cancer burden across the state by prioritizing nine key cancer focus areas and tackling cancer-related disparities affecting diverse communities throughout Washington.

459

Jobs Created¹

Workforce Development

By the end of FY 2026, an estimated 459 jobs within Washington State will be attributable to economic activity initiated by **CARE Fund** grants. This growth supports a vibrant workforce in cancer research and related industries, strengthening the state’s position as a leader in life sciences and health innovation.

\$5M

Capacity

Improved Health Outcomes

CARE Fund has invested more than \$5M in six grants to increase diversity in clinical trials, to conduct cancer clinical trials or to address patients’ barriers to participation.

195%

Economic Impact²

An independent economic impact analysis found that every \$1 in **CARE Fund** grants generates \$1.95 to Washington’s economy, demonstrating CARE Fund’s strong return on investment and its role in fueling economic growth alongside scientific advancement.

>500

Publications Produced

Increase Generation and Sharing of Research Findings

CARE Fund-supported researchers have contributed extensively to the scientific community, producing more than 500 publications that advance understanding and innovation in cancer research. These publications reflect CARE Fund’s commitment- to fostering discovery and disseminating knowledge.

1st

Grantee Convening

Increase Cross Sector Engagement and Collaboration

CARE Fund hosted its first-ever **Grantee Convening**, bringing together cancer research teams from academia, nonprofit organizations, and industry. This event fostered collaboration and partnership-building across sectors, strengthening the cancer research community in Washington.

1 Independent third-party Economic Impact Assessment, Issued June 11, 2024
2 Independent third-party Economic Impact Assessment, Issued June 11, 2024



Grant and Other Cancer Research Investment Highlights

This section includes the grants awarded, grant-funded work in progress, research accomplishments, prevention, and care activities; and a summary of research, prevention, and care-related findings, including promising new areas for investment (per RCW 43.348.050(5)).

In Fiscal Year 2025, the CARE Board awarded over \$10 million in the first cycle of **Implementation and Outcomes Research** grants.

This grant opportunity aims to support innovative investigators from eligible organizations to translate promising research and scientific discoveries into the development of tools, devices, technologies, therapeutics, or interventions, that have the potential to address cancer care across the cancer continuum that will ultimately advance cancer care, lessen the burden of cancer, and improve health outcomes.

CARE Fund congratulates the inaugural grantees in this category, to support implementation, translational, and outcomes research that advance the application of scientific discoveries and technologies or informs how the application of scientific discoveries impact patients and populations.

For more information on research, prevention, and care-related findings, including promising new areas for investment, see wacarefund.org.

Ten Grantees Were Awarded \$10,256,298 for Implementation Outcomes Research (Cycle 1)



Dotquant, LLC

A Three-in-One HER Family Targeted RNA Drug for Breast Cancer

Principal Investigator: **Hongyan Liu, PhD**
Research Area: **Treatment**
Cancer Type: **Breast**



Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center

Partnering with Washington State Tribal Communities to Develop Culturally-Tailored Nutrition Resources and Reduce Cancer Health Disparities

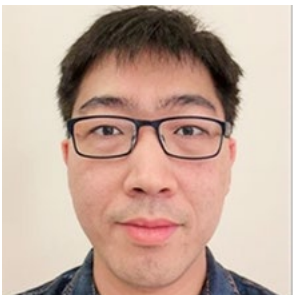
Principal Investigator: **Heather Greenlee, ND, PhD, MPH; Amanda Fretts, PhD, MPH**
Research Area: **Prevention**
Cancer Type: **Multiple Types**



Seattle Children's Research Institute

Converting an Immunotherapy Resistance Mechanism into a Vulnerability Using Slow-Release Local Immunotherapy

Principal Investigator: **Jim Olson, MD, PhD**
Research Area: **Treatment**
Cancer Type: **Multiple Types**



Seattle Children's Research Institute

Advanced Platform for Developing Conditionally Stable Sensors and Effectors for Cancer Applications

Principal Investigator: **Jonathan Tang, PhD**
Research Area: **Early Detection, Diagnosis and Prognosis**
Cancer Type: **Pan-Cancer**

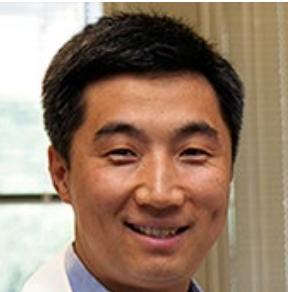


Talus Bioscience, Inc.

Development of a Direct Inhibitor of the Brachyury Transcription Factor for Chordoma and Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

Principal Investigator: **Alex Federation, PhD**
Research Area: **Treatment**
Cancer Type: **Multiple Types**

Grantees Continued



University of Washington
RNA Therapeutics: Bridging the Gap Between Research and Translation

Principal Investigator: **Xiaohu Gao, PhD**
Research Area: **Treatment**
Cancer Type: **Prostate**



University of Washington
Workplace Cancer Prevention and Screening: Scaling Up Connect to Wellness for Employees in Low-Wage Industries Across Washington State

Principal Investigator: **Peggy Hannon, PhD, MPH**
Research Area: **Prevention**
Cancer Type: **Multiple Types**



University of Washington
Advancing Merkel Cell Carcinoma Management: Improved Recurrence Detection and New Approaches for Immunotherapy-Refractory Disease

Principal Investigator: **Paul Nghiem, MD, PhD**
Research Area: **Treatment**
Cancer Type: **Merkel Cell Carcinoma**



University of Washington
Phase II Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial evaluating a Scalable, Personalized Home-Based Activity Intervention with ExerciseRx: The EMPOWER Trial

Principal Investigator: **Sarah Psutka, MD, MSc; Cindy Lin, MD, FACS, FAAPMR**
Research Area: **Cancer Control, Survivorship and Outcomes**
Cancer Type: **Bladder**



Wayfinder Biosciences, Inc.
Developing Novel Small Molecule Therapeutics for MYC-Driven Cancers Using Wayfinder Biosciences' Proprietary RNA-Drugging Platform

Principal Investigator: **David Sparkman-Yager, PhD**
Research Area: **Treatment**
Cancer Type: **Multiple Types**

CARE Fund “provided the necessary funding to build a research team, to bring highly skilled scientists together to work together. This award allowed us to **really invest in cancer survivors** as research partners without the stress that funding can often create. **CARE Fund** allowed this work to get out of the block sprinting rather than jogging.

The existence of **CARE Fund** truly demonstrates how Washington stands above many other states in its ability to be visionary in its commitment to science.”

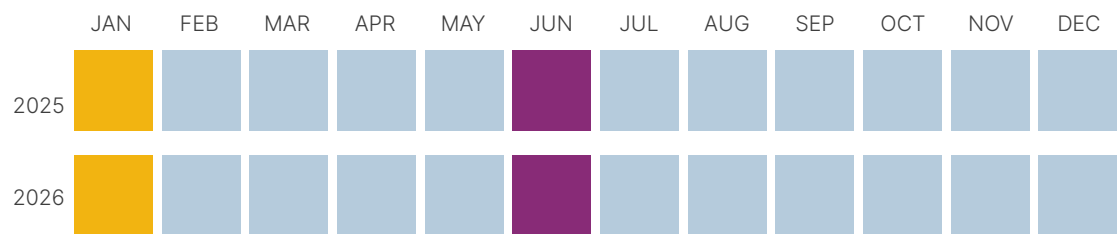


Dr. Yaw Nyame
CARE Fund Grantee

Future Program Directions

This section includes CARE Fund’s future program directions with respect to cancer research, prevention, and care (per RCW 43.348.040(5)).

In FY 2025, the CARE Board launched a new approach to grantmaking, introducing regular grant cycles and new funding categories. These more predictable cycles give applicants additional time to prepare proposals, seek matching funds, and build strong teams and collaborations. The Board remains committed to attracting a wide range of applications from across Washington State.



January

Scientific Discovery Research Grants

To support innovative cancer researchers and projects seeking new scientific discoveries and breakthrough ideas.

June

Implementation and Outcomes Research Grants

To support implementation, translational, and outcomes research aimed at advancing the application of scientific discoveries and technologies and evaluating their impact on patients and populations.

Co-Funding Partnerships

In addition to biannual grantmaking, **CARE Fund** actively seeks co-funding partnerships with other organizations and funders. These partnerships are considered year-round and are not limited to the January and June grant cycles. By collaborating with other funders, private philanthropy, and other grantmakers, **CARE Fund** can help create new opportunities to leverage public and private funds for cancer research and related initiatives. Co-funding partnerships enable **CARE Fund** to invest or co-invest in innovative projects and interventions that may not be addressed through **CARE Fund’s** standard grant programs.



Interested in exploring co-funding partnership opportunities? Contact us.

Joseph Sparacio
CARE Fund Deputy Director
joseph@wacarefund.org

Additional Grant Opportunities

Other funding opportunities may be announced in response to emergent issues or strategic priorities. All proposals are evaluated by independent, expert scientific review committees. Every grant and partnership must promote cancer research to benefit the people of Washington State.

CARE Fund Grantee Convening

In May 2025 CARE Fund held a **Grantee Convening** of grantees and their teams, CARE Board and staff, and other stakeholders to foster community connection and collaboration.



Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Summary

This section includes the endowment’s administrative expenses and provides an assessment of the availability of funding for cancer research, prevention, and care from sources other than the endowment (per RCW 43.348.050(5)).

From its inception, the Washington State Legislature has consistently invested in **CARE Fund**, including a one-time \$30 million appropriation in FY 2023 to further accelerate cancer research across the state.

The CARE Board continues to expand grantmaking in response to emerging needs and strategic opportunities, introducing new funding categories and supporting a broad pool of applicants statewide.



GRANTS AND OTHER INVESTMENTS MADE TO COST OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (UNAUDITED)

Fiscal Year 2025

\$11,393,029 Grants and Other Investments Made for Cancer Research	\$1,968,347 Program Administration and Operations Costs, Including Operations, Investment Management, Peer Review Services and Program Administration	
	\$355,068 Additional Funding from Sources Others than the Endowment	\$175,140 Funds Retained by Washington State Department of Commerce, for Contract Administration, Program Performance Audit, and Assistant Attorney General Costs



Board of Directors

As of June 30, 2025

The work of **CARE Fund** would not be possible without the vision and expertise of the Governor-appointed CARE Board of Directors.*

Cliff Berkman, PhD
[Washington State University](#)

Thomas Brown, MD, MBA, Board Treasurer
[Sygnomics](#)

Carol Coram, EdD
[American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Network](#)

Marc Cummings, Board Secretary
[Life Science Washington](#)

Nancy Davidson, MD
[Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center](#)

Sara Hurvitz, MD, FACP
[University of Washington](#)

Gary S. Kaplan, MD, FACP, FACMPE, FACPE
(Formerly) [Virginia Mason Franciscan Health](#)

Alicia Klein, MHA
[Tacoma Pierce County Health Department](#)

Elizabeth Lawlor, MD, PhD, Board Chair
[Seattle Children's Research Institute](#)

Maura Little, Board Vice-Chair
[HCP OneHealthPort](#)

Libby Mongue-Wymore
[American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Network](#)

Bobbie-Jo Webb-Robertson, PhD
[Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#)

Vacant
[To be nominated by President of the Senate](#)

*Organizational affiliations are for identification purposes only.



CARE Fund Staff

As of June 30, 2025

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Peter Choi, Director of Program Design and Evaluation
peter@wacarefund.org

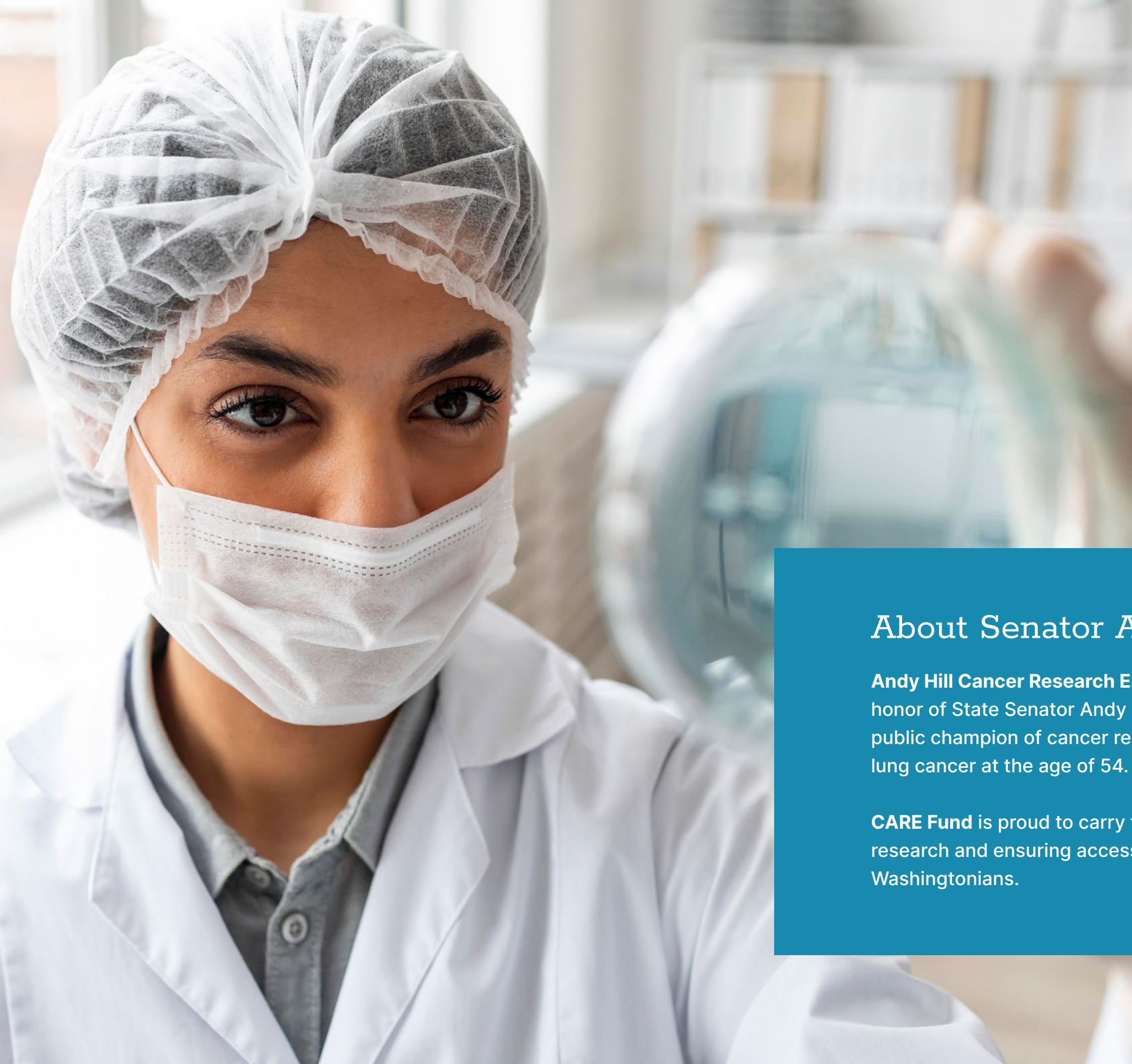
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Joseph Sparacio, Deputy Director
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About Senator Andy Hill

Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund is named in honor of State Senator Andy Hill who was a dedicated legislator and public champion of cancer research. In 2016, he lost his battle with lung cancer at the age of 54.

CARE Fund is proud to carry forward his legacy of promoting cancer research and ensuring access to scientific advancements for all Washingtonians.



Washington Cancer Impact Foundation is the
contracted Program Administrator for CARE Fund.



Andy Hill CARE Fund
Washington's Cancer Research Endowment

Andy Hill CARE Fund
c/o Washington Cancer Impact Foundation
P.O. Box 429
Bothell, WA 98041

