

Novartis STEP Program™ awards nearly \$375,000 to patient advocacy organizations for their innovative solutions in biomarker testing; now accepting proposals for caregiving in cancer and certain blood disorders

Oct 05, 2020

- *The STEP (Solutions to Empower Patients) Program™ supports nonprofit organizations that deliver creative solutions to address barriers to care*
- *Five patient advocacy organizations were provided funding for their solutions to raise awareness of and access to biomarker testing among the cancer community*
- *The STEP Program is now open for submissions that demonstrate innovation in addressing the needs of caregivers in cancer and certain blood disorders*

East Hanover, October 5, 2020 — Novartis awarded a total of nearly \$375,000 to five US-based patient advocacy groups through the company's signature advocacy initiative, the STEP (Solutions to Empower Patients) Program™. The recipients were chosen for their impactful initiatives to improve awareness and education, self-advocacy, and policy development for biomarker testing, which has the potential to transform treatment strategies for people living with certain types of cancer.

These innovative STEP Program initiatives include:

- **GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer's** Project PROMOTE (Precision Oncology Molecular Testing Education) is an educational campaign that aims to increase biomarker testing in the lung cancer community.
- **Patient Advocate Foundation's** Patient Guide to Biomarker Testing will increase understanding and awareness of biomarker testing across cancer types.
- **Sisters Network Inc.'s** Pink Table Talk: Know Your HERstory is a multimedia campaign and online symposium to educate underserved African American breast cancer patients, caregivers, and the greater community on the importance of biomarker testing.
- **The Life Raft Group's** Biomarker Testing Campaign will launch a series of webinars and videos to promote awareness and education, as well as develop an abstract, to improve guidelines for patients with gastrointestinal stromal tumor.
- **Young Survival Coalition's** Let's Get Digital will develop a digital toolkit about biomarker testing for young adults with breast cancer.

"Though advances in precision medicine have transformed treatment strategies for people living with certain types of cancer, awareness and access to biomarker testing continues to present unique challenges across the cancer community," said Ameet Mallik, Executive Vice President and Head, US, Novartis Oncology. "Through the STEP Program, we are proud to support innovative ideas that help provide better care for people with cancer."

Now Accepting Proposals that Support Caregiving in Cancer and Blood Disorders

Recognizing the important work patient advocacy organizations do to support patients and caregivers, the STEP Program is now inviting US patient advocacy organizations to submit proposals that address an unmet need in caregiving for cancer and certain blood disorders.

Caregivers for patients with cancer and certain blood disorders manage a wide range of responsibilities, and often face many emotional and physical challenges. The STEP Program will provide up to six patient advocacy organizations with up to \$50,000 each for their innovative programs.

“While many people realize the critical role that caregivers play, we recognize the opportunity to do more. We are excited to open the STEP Program to initiatives that help reduce caregiver burden for loved ones of cancer and blood disorder patients,” said Mallik.

Application Details for Interested Patient Advocacy Organizations

US-based, 501(c)(3) patient advocacy organizations are welcome to submit a STEP Program proposal for consideration. Proposals focusing on cancer and the following blood disorders will be considered for funding: sickle cell disease (SCD), immune thrombocytopenia (ITP), aplastic anemia (AA), and thalassemia. Proposals should focus on at least one of the following criteria:

- Navigating care and treatment
- Self-care
- Addressing needs of specific populations including caring for patients with different disease stages, patient/caregiver relationships, and demographics

Proposals will be evaluated by an independent external review committee consisting of experts in a variety of fields.

Organizations that wish to apply for funding from the program should complete the required submission form available [here](#). All submissions must be received by 11:59 PM ET on October 28, 2020.

For more information about the STEP Program, including submission details, please visit the Novartis US website, [STEP Program page](#).

Novartis created the STEP Program in 2017 to inspire and enable US-based nonprofit organizations to help to address some of the most significant gaps in health care. The STEP Program has previously supported high-impact, patient-focused initiatives by ten organizations across the country.

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