



2026 IMPACT REPORT

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Photo courtesy of AACR



INTRODUCTION

Cancer is one of the greatest threats to women's health, and for far too long, women's cancers have been underfunded, under-researched, and overlooked. We set out to help change that.

What started in 2010 as a partnership with Pelotonia has grown into a powerful movement. Together with our associates and community, we've raised more than \$23 million to fuel breakthrough cancer research. Still, we knew raising money wasn't enough; we wanted to help address the systemic factors impacting women's cancers and change the story for women everywhere.

With this mission in mind, we launched the **Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers (VSGF)** – a bold initiative in partnership with Pelotonia and the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), designed to fast-track innovative cancer research by women, for women in 2021.

The mission? Simple: fund cutting-edge research, close the gender gap in science, and improve and save more lives.

Since then, we've invested over \$13.5 million into the hands of 25 trailblazing women scientists driving progress in breast and gynecologic cancers. From early-career researchers to rising innovators, our grant programs are helping them push boundaries, ask bigger questions, and uncover smarter solutions for women, by women.

But we're not stopping at funding. We're building a global pipeline of women leaders in cancer research offering mentorship, career support, and access to the world's biggest cancer research stages.

This is more than a fund; it's a commitment to change the future of women's health. With bold investment and purposeful action, we're driving real progress that will save lives for generations to come.

CANCER LANDSCAPE

Why Women's Cancers Demand Urgent Attention

- Survival rates for some women's cancers are rising, yet beneath the surface lies a sobering reality: progress remains uneven and critical challenges persist. **Breast cancer deaths have dropped by 44% since 1989**, preventing more than 517,900 deaths, but mortality rates remain 38% higher for black women than white women, despite lower incidence.
- **Endometrial cancer diagnoses are rising**, fueled in part by metabolic conditions.
- **Ovarian cancer outcomes have seen limited progress**, largely due to the absence of effective early detection tools.
- **Cervical cancer is highly preventable**, yet women in underserved communities continue to experience higher diagnosis rates and mortality due to unequal access to HPV vaccinations and screenings.

These disparities are a stark reminder that breakthroughs alone are not enough. We must ensure that every woman benefits – through targeted research, stronger advocacy, and expanded access to care.

The Role of Research

Studying women's cancers is not simply about improving treatments; it's about understanding the unique biological, hormonal, and genetic factors that shape how these cancers develop, spread, and respond to therapy. Women's cancers are influenced by:

- **Reproductive and hormonal history** (age at the time of her first birth, breastfeeding, menstrual patterns, hormone therapy use)
- **Genetic predisposition** (BRCA1/2 mutations and others)
- **Lifestyle factors** (body weight, alcohol use, physical activity)

Targeted research can illuminate why certain populations – particularly women of color – experience disproportionate outcomes and can drive the development of prevention and treatment strategies that work for all women.

A Call to Action

The data paints a clear picture: we cannot afford to wait. Breast, uterine, ovarian, cervical, and other gynecologic cancers collectively represent a significant and growing burden for women. Many of these devastating diseases are preventable or treatable, if detected early, yet too many women continue to be diagnosed late or face barriers to lifesaving care.

By investing in research, expanding prevention programs, and closing the gaps in early detection, we can change the trajectory of outcomes. Every breakthrough, every discovery, and every life saved brings us closer to a future where fewer women hear the words, "You have cancer."



THE VICTORIA'S SECRET GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN'S CANCERS OVERVIEW

So, what exactly is the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers?

The VSGF was established to accelerate innovation in cancer research for women, by women.

It aims to improve and save the lives of millions of women around the world by:

1. Funding innovative research aimed at improving outcomes for women's cancers.
2. Investing in the next generation of women scientists who represent the diverse populations they serve.
3. Inspiring and educating millions of women around the world through cancer awareness, screening and prevention campaigns.

Our multi-layered approach features three targeted grant programs – the Career Development Awards (CDA), Rising Innovator Grants (RIG), and Meritorious Awards – each providing critical funding and support at every stage of a research career, from emerging scientists to established leaders, all driving progress in the fight against women's cancers.

Every nomination undergoes rigorous evaluation by our distinguished Scientific Advisory Committee, which is a group of international experts, ensuring an equitable, high-caliber review process that champions both fairness and scientific excellence.

Here's an overview of our grant programs, designed to fund and empower women researchers at key moments in their careers:

- **Career Development Awards (CDA):** Provides early-career investigators with the resources and mentorship needed to establish independent research programs focused on women's cancers.
- **Rising Innovator Grants (RIG):** Supports mid-career researchers in pursuing bold, high-risk ideas with the potential to transform prevention, detection, and treatment options.
- **Meritorious Awards:** Recognizes trailblazing senior leaders with monetary support to continue shaping the field while mentoring the next generation of researchers.



Photo courtesy of AACR

THE VICTORIA'S SECRET GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN'S CANCERS SUPPORTS MORE THAN JUST RESEARCH GRANTS:

The VSGF doesn't stop at research grants. It drives meaningful impact through education, workshops, and support programs that help women and young girls who are eager to make a difference in the world of cancer research. This includes:

- **Career Development Workshops:** Launched three curated workshops, impacting more than 800 women across all career stages, helping them hone leadership and professional skills at the AACR Annual Meeting.
- **ACS ResearchHERS SHE in Oncology Program:** Sponsored three cohorts, totaling over 40 participants, of high school-aged girls for a two-week immersive lab experience. This program introduces juniors and seniors—particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM—to cancer-related career paths including research, clinical care, survivorship, and community engagement.
- **Women in Cancer Research (WICR) Scholar Awards:** Provided 38 junior researchers with travel grants to present their work at the AACR Annual Meeting. Through this work, these young trailblazers were able to build connections with the international cancer research community.
- **Global Scholar-in-Training Awards (GSITA):** Supported 17 early-career women scientists worldwide with opportunities to attend the AACR Annual Meeting, share their research, and expand their professional networks.

In total, these programs have made an impact on the lives of nearly 900 women and girls at every stage of their scientific journey, from high school students just discovering cancer research to senior investigators shaping the future of women's cancers.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Launched in 2022, in partnership with Pelotonia and the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers Career Development Awards invest in the next generation of women scientists advancing groundbreaking breast and gynecologic cancer research globally.

This award supports early-stage investigators who are driving innovation in prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and the elimination of cancer health disparities.

Each Career Development Award provides \$206,000 over two years to help researchers dedicate more time to their work. Funding may be used for research-related expenses such as salary support, laboratory

supplies, equipment, publication costs, and training for research team members. By empowering talented women at pivotal points in their careers, the award not only accelerates promising science but also helps build a cancer research workforce that's reflective of our communities.

Did You Know...

1 in 8 women will develop invasive breast cancer in her lifetime.

“

The Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers grant had a tremendous impact on my research trajectory. It funded two critical pilot studies—focus groups in Kenya that proved women would embrace self-administered treatments, and a pilot clinical trial demonstrating that women could safely use these therapies at home. These studies generated the compelling preliminary data that led to my R01 grant scoring in the 3rd percentile on first submission—virtually guaranteeing funding for the definitive trial that will determine whether this approach can save women's lives.

Chemtai Mungo, MD, MPH, FACOG

NO WOMAN LEFT BEHIND: INNOVATIVE RESEARCH EXPANDS ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING CANCER TREATMENT

Many women face daunting barriers to cancer treatment, especially those in rural or resource-poor settings where specialized care is scarce. The VSGF supports researchers tackling these challenges head-on, including Chemtai Mungo, MD, MPH, FACOG, an Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a 2022 VSGF Career Development Awardee.

Dr. Mungo grew up in a small town in Kenya, where many women faced cervical cancer with limited access to care and support, and where social and economic barriers too often made the disease a devastating outcome. These experiences shaped her mission: to transform how cervical cancer is treated in Kenya so women don't have to travel long distances or rely on limited clinic visits.

Her approach tests whether women in low-resource settings can safely self-administer cervical cancer treatment at home, prioritizing their comfort and autonomy. Supported by VSGF funding, Dr. Mungo conducted two pilot studies in Kenya demonstrating not only the safety of this approach, but also that women would embrace self-administered treatments.

These studies provided crucial evidence, leading to a major National Institutes of Health Research Project grant to further test this model. Furthermore, it provided a potential game-changer for women worldwide, including underserved rural populations in the U.S., where cervical cancer rates are disproportionately high.

In September 2024, Dr. Mungo was appointed to the Board of the International Papillomavirus Society in recognition of her significant contributions to women's global health and her research in cervical cancer, particularly in low-resource communities.

Dr. Mungo highlights what makes VSGF unique: how lived experience and cultural context are just as critical to discovery as data. She collaborates actively with other VSGF grantees, creating a community united by a vision where no woman is left behind.

Through innovative, community-informed research, Dr. Mungo and her peers are expanding access to care, ensuring that women have a fighting chance against cancer, regardless of where they live.



MEET THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARDEES

These grantees embody the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancer's mission to amplify women's voices, break down barriers, and advance bold ideas that transform outcomes for women everywhere.

2022 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS



Valentina Hoyos, M.D.

Institution: Baylor College of Medicine Center for Cell and Gene Therapy, Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center, USA

Research: Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

Dr. Hoyos Velez used support from the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers to advance her work on developing new immunotherapies for aggressive breast cancers. She and her team identified a novel target expressed on triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) cells and engineered a second-generation CAR T therapy designed to attack it. Dr. Hoyos Velez's grant helped generate pivotal preclinical data that led to a publication in *Molecular Therapy*, which laid the foundation for a PhD student's dissertation, and contributed to Dr. Hoyos Velez's promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. Her research continues to push forward strategies to make cell therapies more effective and accessible, including overcoming the hostile tumor microenvironment that limits current treatments.

“

My hope for the future of research in women's cancers is that we develop more precise and accessible treatments that not only lead to a cure but also improve quality of life, while building a research community as diverse and resilient as the women we aim to help.



Martina McDermott, PhD

Institution: The Regents of the University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Research: Breast and Ovarian Cancer

Dr. McDermott and her team are developing a new kind of treatment that delivers chemotherapy straight to cancer cells while avoiding most healthy ones. Thanks to Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers, her research showed early promise in ovarian and endometrial cancers. She is now working to move this therapy closer to clinical trials so more women can have safer, more effective treatment options.

“

My hope for the future of research in women's cancers is that the research being done today will lead to a world where better treatment options and screening mean fewer women dying from cancer.



Chemtai Mungo, MD, MPH, FACOG

Institution: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, USA

Research: Cervical Cancer

Dr. Mungo used support from the Victoria’s Secret Global Fund for Women’s Cancers to show that women can safely and effectively use self-administered treatments for early cervical cancer. Her pilot studies in Kenya demonstrated both safety and strong acceptance of this approach, generating the evidence that secured major federal funding for a larger clinical trial. Her work is bringing us closer to a future where women everywhere—from Sub-Saharan Africa to rural U.S. communities—can prevent cervical cancer in their own homes.

“

My hope for the future of research in women’s cancers is truly inclusive and equitable.



Mya Roberson, PhD, MSPH

Institution: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health, USA

Research: Breast, Ovarian, and Endometrial Cancer

Dr. Roberson used support from the Victoria’s Secret Global Fund for Women’s Cancers to expand her research on equity in genetic testing and treatment for hereditary breast and ovarian cancers. She demonstrated how barriers—and enabling factors—shape Black women’s access to testing and care and broadened her focus on precision medicine in metastatic breast cancer. Her work is advancing new tools, partnerships, and community-driven strategies to ensure treatment innovations reach all women. With additional backing now secured from national funders, she is building on this momentum to create real-world solutions that dismantle disparities in cancer care.

“

My hope for the future of research in women’s cancers is a world in which all women can thrive.



Shuang Zhang, PhD

Institution: The Third Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University, China

Research: Ovarian and Endometrial Cancer

Dr. Zhang used support from the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers to launch her independent lab focused on high-grade serous ovarian cancer, the most common and deadly subtype of ovarian cancer. With this grant, she recruited her first research team and developed critical organoid models to study cancer stem cells—cells thought to drive recurrence, drug resistance, and metastasis. Her work has already led to new methodologies, publications, and patents, and secured additional national funding in China. By identifying key genetic drivers and testing targeted therapies in patient-derived models, Dr. Zhang is paving the way for earlier detection and more effective treatments for women facing these aggressive cancers.

“

My hope for the future of research in women's cancers is leveraging cutting-edge early detection tools—such as liquid biopsies and AI-driven biomarker analysis—to intercept aggressive cancers at their earliest most treatable stages.

Did You Know...

517,900 breast cancer deaths prevented since 1989 through earlier detection and improved treatment.

2023 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS



Sarah E. Johnstone, MD, PhD

Institution: Harvard Medical School / Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, USA
Research: Breast Cancer

“

The goal of my research is to understand how cancer rewires DNA to grow and spread. By finding the weak points in this process, I hope to open the door to new treatments for women with ovarian and uterine cancers.



Purna Joshi, PhD

Institution: The University of Texas at Dallas, USA
Research: Breast Cancer

“

The goal of my research is to figure out why obesity makes breast cancer more likely to come back and harder to treat. By studying how fat cells send signals to tumors, I want to find ways to stop this and give women better outcomes.



Mary Mullen, MD

Institution: Washington University in St. Louis, USA
Research: Ovarian Cancer

“

The goal of my research is to help women whose ovarian cancer stops responding to chemotherapy. I am working to find out why the drugs stop working and how to make them effective again.



Angelina T. Regua, PhD

Institution: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, USA
Research: Breast Cancer (Brain Metastases)

“

The goal of my research is to stop breast cancer from spreading to the brain, which makes it especially hard to treat. I am testing a new approach that could lead to medicines that protect women from this dangerous form of cancer.



Ana Ruiz-Saenz, PhD

Institution: CIC bioGUNE, Spain
Research: Breast Cancer

“

The goal of my research is to make breast cancer treatments work better by uncovering hidden features on the surface of cancer cells. This could help doctors predict which medicines will work best for each patient.

Did You Know...

In 2025, there were 13,360 cervical cancer cases - which is preventable through HPV vaccination and screening.

2024 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD RECIPIENT



Louise Fets, PhD

Institution: MRC Laboratory of Medical Sciences, United Kingdom
Research: Ovarian Cancer

“

The goal of my research is to understand why ovarian cancer patients respond differently to Poly (ADP-ribose) Polymerase (PARP) inhibitor treatments. By studying how these drugs spread inside tumors, I hope to help doctors better predict resistance and create more effective, personalized therapies.



Francesca S. Gazzaniga, PhD

Institution: Massachusetts General Hospital, USA
Research: Breast Cancer (Triple-Negative Breast Cancer)

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The goal of my research is to explore how diet and the gut microbiome affect the immune system's ability to fight triple-negative breast cancer. By uncovering these connections, I aim to make immunotherapy work for more patients.

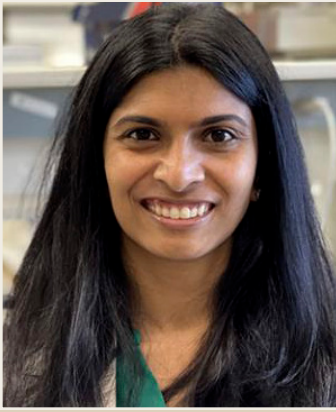


Utthara Nayar, PhD

Institution: Johns Hopkins University, USA
Research: Breast Cancer

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The goal of my research is to study new mutations in the estrogen receptor that cause resistance to standard treatments. By understanding how these mutations drive cancer growth, I hope to find new ways to treat patients with resistant breast cancer.



Sangeetha Reddy, MD MSCE

Institution: UT Southwestern Medical Center, USA

Research: Breast Cancer (Triple-Negative Breast Cancer, Immunotherapy)

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The goal of my research is to strengthen the body's immune response against triple-negative breast cancer. By developing smarter treatment combinations, I aim to bring more effective therapies to patients.



Priyanka Verma, PhD

Institution: Washington University in St. Louis, USA

Research: Breast & Ovarian Cancer (BRCA-mutant, PARP inhibitors)

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The goal of my research is to understand why PARP inhibitor drugs don't always work for people with BRCA-mutant cancers. By studying how cancer cell metabolism affects drug response, I hope to create tools that help match patients to the treatments most likely to succeed.



For more information on all our grantees and their research, visit www.Pelotonia.org or www.AACR.org.

HOW GLOBAL IS THE VICTORIA'S SECRET GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN'S CANCERS?



Number of Researchers Supported by Geographic Location

United States	40
Argentina	3
Malaysia	2
Turkey	2
United Kingdom	2
Ghana	2
India	2
Australia	1
South Africa	1
Brazil	1
Nigeria	1
Jordan	1
Ethiopia	1
China	1
Netherlands	1
Spain	1
Denmark	1

Where are the CDA and RIG Grantees Research is Making an Impact

TUMOR SUBTYPES	
Breast	13
Cervical	1
Endometrial	6
Ovarian	9
TYPE OF RESEARCH	
Basic	10
Translational	15
Clinical	2
Epidemiological	2
Public Health	2
DISCIPLINES	
Early Disease	3
Detection	4
Metastatic Cancer	7
Relapse	2
Survivorship	1
Treatment Resistance	9

RESEARCH PROGRESS & COLLECTIVE IMPACT SINCE 2022

Every advancement in women’s cancer research begins with an early idea and the opportunity to test it. From 2022 to 2025, the Victoria’s Secret Global Fund for Women’s Cancers provided critical early support, enabling researchers to generate initial findings that strengthen future proposals and demonstrate the promise of their work.

When these early results show potential, investigators are often able to secure additional funding—support from institutions, government agencies, or other foundations—allowing projects to expand and accelerate. Between 2022 and 2025, VSGF-supported investigators have secured more than \$29 million in additional funding, with 86 percent of 2022 and 2023 grantees already advancing to the next stage of research.

As these programs grow, their impact extends beyond individual laboratories. Research findings are shared through scientific publications and presenta-

tions, contributing to the broader body of knowledge that informs future research directions and clinical approaches. During this same period, Global Fund grantees produced 19 peer-reviewed publications and delivered 75 presentations at major scientific meetings, helping ensure new insights are disseminated, rigorously evaluated, and built upon by the wider research community.

In select cases, discoveries resulting from this work have also led to patented innovations, signaling the potential for new tools, technologies, or approaches that may one day benefit patients. Together, these outcomes reflect the collective impact of focused, early investment over a short timeframe. By supporting researchers at a pivotal stage, the VSGF catalyzes sustained research progress, amplifies scientific knowledge, and advances the field of women’s cancer research.



\$29M+ in follow-on funding secured to date



75 scientific presentations delivered at major meetings



86% of 2022 and 2023 grantees have received follow-on support



1 patent filed



19 publications advancing women’s cancer research

RISING INNOVATOR GRANTS

The Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers Rising Innovator Research Grant is designed to propel women scientists who are already emerging as leaders in their fields toward the next level of impact. Unlike the Career Development Awards, which focus on supporting early-stage investigators, the Rising Innovator Grants provide a significant investment in mid-career researchers with bold, high-potential ideas poised to transform outcomes in breast and gynecologic cancers.

To date, five grants have been awarded to investigators whose work spans prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and the elimination of cancer health disparities. Each award provides \$700,000 over three years, allowing recipients to dedicate the majority of their effort to their science while building strong research teams and pursuing collaborative,

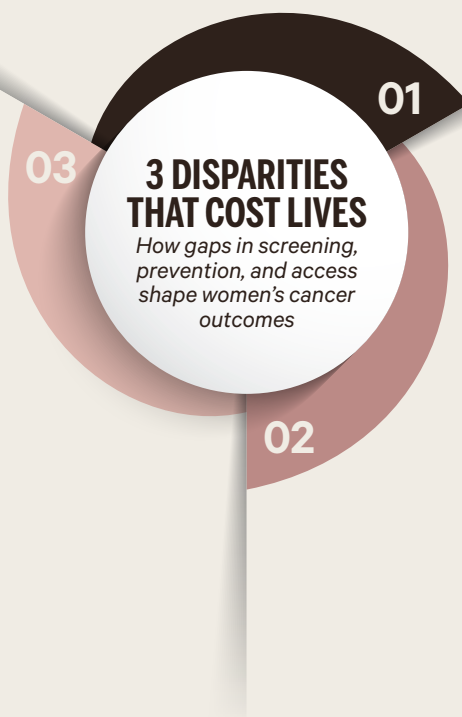
high-impact projects. Funding can support salary, laboratory supplies, equipment, training, travel, and other essential resources that accelerate innovation.

In addition, the Rising Innovator program includes a unique nomination process where each Meritorious Awardee identifies five outstanding women scientists from across the globe to apply to become a Rising Innovator, ensuring the pool of candidates is diverse in geography, background, and scientific focus. This model not only elevates individual researchers but also strengthens the global community of women driving progress in cancer science.

By combining significant resources with intentional outreach, the Rising Innovator Grants are cultivating the next wave of trailblazers whose discoveries have the potential to reshape the future of women's cancers.

Ovarian cancer is often diagnosed at advanced stages because there is no effective general screening method, contributing to poor survival outcomes

Breast cancer mortality is 38% higher in black women, despite lower rates of diagnosis, underscoring the impact of disparities in early detection and treatment



Cervical cancer is largely preventable through HPV vaccination and regular screening, yet women in underserved communities experience higher diagnosis rates and mortality due to limited access to these services

TURNING DISCOVERY INTO HOPE: DR. PRISCILLA BRASTIANOS' FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER BRAIN METASTASES

Priscilla Brastianos, MD is a trailblazer in cancer research. She serves as Director of the CNS Metastasis Center at Massachusetts General Hospital, Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School, and a 2023 Rising Innovator Grantee. Dr. Brastianos has devoted her career to understanding how breast cancer spreads to the brain, a devastating process that often leaves patients with severe neurological symptoms and few treatment options. Her mission is deeply personal. After losing both her mother and grandmother to metastatic breast cancer, she has turned her personal experience with the diseases into driving innovation in science that gives patients and families new hope.

Using advanced laboratory techniques and analyses of patient tumor samples, Dr. Brastianos and her team identify specific genetic and epigenetic changes that may fuel cancer spread to the brain. This detailed data is not just information; it guides the development of targeted therapies designed to block these changes and improve patient outcomes.

Dr. Brastianos says the support from the VSGF has been pivotal, enabling her to analyze a large collection of tumor samples and build models critical for testing new drugs. These foundational steps have set the stage for future clinical trials and new treatment possibilities that could transform a devastating diagnosis into one with real therapeutic options and the possibility of long-term survival.

By aiming to identify and fix genetic changes that may lead to brain metastasis, Dr. Brastianos is working to develop new targeted therapies that offer patients better options and renewed hope.



MEET THE INAUGURAL RISING INNOVATOR GRANTEES

These extraordinary scientists are tackling some of the most urgent challenges in breast and gynecologic cancers, from closing disparities to advancing new therapies for aggressive, treatment-resistant disease. Their work not only pushes the boundaries of science but also reflects a shared commitment to innovation and improving outcomes for women everywhere.



Priscilla Brastianos, MD

Institution: Massachusetts General Hospital / Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Research: Breast Cancer – Brain Metastases



My hope for the future of research in women's cancers is to see a world where metastatic disease is no longer a terminal diagnosis, but one that can be effectively treated with long-term survival and quality of life.



Kemi Doll, MD, MSCR

Institution: University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, USA

Research: Endometrial Cancer & Health Equity

Dr. Doll is addressing the urgent need for earlier, more accurate detection of endometrial cancer, particularly among Black women who face disproportionately higher mortality rates. With support from the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers, she and her team created the first culturally relevant public health campaign to raise awareness of endometrial cancer symptoms and limitations of current screening tools. By combining large-scale data analysis with community-led focus groups, her research is helping shift guidelines toward a "biopsy-first" approach, ensuring earlier diagnoses and reducing inequities in care.



My hope is to decrease the mortality rate of endometrial cancer among Black women in the U.S. by improving early detection, treatment quality, and discovery of new therapeutic targets.



Marleen Kok, MD, PhD

Institution: Netherlands Cancer Institute, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Research: Triple-Negative Breast Cancer & Immunotherapy

Dr. Kok is working to make immunotherapy more effective for patients with hard-to-treat triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC). With support from the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers Rising Innovator Grant, her team is using cutting-edge, single-cell technologies and spatial imaging to understand which immune cells in the tumor environment help—or hinder—response to anti-PD1 therapy, and precisely where they're located. Their goal is to uncover biomarkers to predict who will benefit from immunotherapy and to inform new immune-modulating treatments for those who currently see little benefit.

“

My hope to identify predictive biomarkers for immunotherapy in triple-negative breast cancer and to open new avenues for immunomodulatory treatments, ultimately improving outcomes for patients with poor-prognosis disease.



Joyce F. Liu, MD, MPH

Institution: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute / Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Research: Endometrial Cancer

High-grade endometrial cancer is an aggressive disease with limited treatment options. Dr. Liu is leading research to change that. With support from the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers, her team is testing a new combination of targeted drugs—called WEE1 and ATR inhibitors—that may work together to kill cancer cells by keeping them from copying their DNA properly as they divide. Using cancer models derived from patient samples, Dr. Liu is developing new insights into how and when WEE1 and ATR inhibitors are active in endometrial cancer cells, with the goal of laying the foundation to develop much-needed new therapies that could offer women with this difficult cancer more time and better outcomes.

“

My hope is to develop new treatment strategies for women with aggressive endometrial cancers and improve both survival and quality of life.



Sandra S. McAllister, PhD

Institution: Brigham & Women's Hospital / Harvard Medical School – Associate Professor of Medicine, Hematology Division, USA

Research: Breast Cancer—Immune Health, Aging & Disparities

Black women and older women across all races face higher rates of death from breast cancer in the United States. Dr. McAllister is investigating whether declines in “immune fitness”—the immune system’s ability to control cancer—contribute to these disparities. Her team is testing how aging and the stress of systemic racism may accelerate immune decline and using lab models to identify strategies that could strengthen immunity against tumors. With support from the Victoria’s Secret Global Fund for Women’s Cancers, she aims to build tools to measure immune health as part of standard cancer risk assessment and, ultimately, improve outcomes for patients most at risk.

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My hope is to reduce racial and age-related disparities in breast cancer by developing ways to evaluate and improve immune fitness, ensuring more women survive and thrive after diagnosis.

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The Victoria’s Secret Global Fund for Women’s Cancers grant had a transformative impact on my career by allowing me to pursue a high-risk, high-reward project that would have been difficult to fund through traditional mechanisms. It provided critical support to analyze a large cohort of brain metastasis samples using cutting-edge approaches including epigenomic analyses, and to develop animal models of brain metastases—an especially challenging but essential step for testing new therapies. This support enabled me to generate foundational data that is now shaping the direction of my lab and opening new avenues for clinical translation.

Priscilla Brastianos, MD

MERITORIOUS AWARDS OVERVIEW

The Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers launched its inaugural platform in 2022 with the 2022 Meritorious Awards, honoring five trail-blazing women cancer researchers whose work has shaped the field of women's cancers. Each awardee received a \$100,000 honorarium in recognition of their outstanding contributions and to further their impact through collaboration, mentorship, and scientific advancement.

For three years following their selection, these leaders will:

- Serve as informal mentors to all grantees supported through the VSGF.
- Nominate 3–5 exceptional investigators to be considered for research funding.
- Participate in biannual progress reviews and networking events.
- Contribute to public-facing campaigns dedicated to women's health, as well as breast and gynecologic cancers.

Nearly 200 nominations were submitted for the inaugural awards—a remarkable milestone for a first-time initiative. Final selections were made by the AACR leadership and the VSGF's Scientific Advisory Council, with careful consideration given to each nominee's scientific excellence, leadership, mentorship, and the overall diversity of the cohort.

Unanimously chosen, these five extraordinary women represent the very best of cancer science and are now helping to guide and inspire the next generation of researchers around the world.



Photo courtesy of AACR

DR. LISA NEWMAN: ADVANCING EQUITY AND INNOVATION IN BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

When Dr. Lisa A. Newman was a young girl, evenings watching General Hospital with her family first sparked her curiosity about medicine. Inspired by Dr. Leslie Weber, she imagined herself in a white coat one day. Decades later, she is living that dream while redefining what's possible in women's cancer research.

Today, Dr. Newman serves as Chief of Breast Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine and Leader of the Multidisciplinary Breast Oncology Programs at NewYork-Presbyterian. She also directs the International Center for the Study of Breast Cancer Subtypes, overseeing a global network of physicians and facilities across Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Canada, and the Caribbean.

Her pioneering work explores the diversity of breast cancer subtypes, with a focus on the higher prevalence of triple negative breast cancer among women of African ancestry. Through this international program, Dr. Newman has advanced scientific understanding while also improving access to care in low-resource communities.

Dr. Newman's passion for this work is deeply personal. Her sister, Debbie—a lawyer, teacher, and adoptive mother—passed away from triple negative breast cancer after only two months. In her sister's honor, Dr. Newman dedicates her research and advocacy to creating a world where no family loses a loved one too soon.

In recognition of her transformative contributions, Dr. Newman was named a Meritorious Awardee of the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers. She is also the first African American woman to serve as Second Vice President of the American College of Surgeons, cementing her trailblazing career as a leader, mentor, and advocate for equity in medicine.

Reflecting on her vision for the future, Dr. Newman envisions a world where “every daughter, sister, and mom can live a full, productive life, fulfilling all their dreams, without the threat of a breast, ovarian, or uterine cancer cutting that life short.”



Photo courtesy of AACR

MEET THE MERITORIOUS AWARDEES



Lisa A. Newman, MD, MPH

Institution: Weill Cornell Medicine

Research: Triple-Negative Breast Cancer and Cancer Disparities

Chief of Breast Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine, Dr. Newman leads ground-breaking international research on triple-negative breast cancer among women of African ancestry. Her work has transformed understanding of cancer disparities and improved care in low-resource communities across Africa and beyond. A dedicated mentor and advocate, she was honored with a Meritorious Award for advancing equity and shaping the future of breast cancer research.



Joan S. Brugge, PhD, FAACR

Institution: Harvard Medical School and the Ludwig Center at Harvard

Research: Tumor Initiation, Drug Resistance, and Therapy Response in Breast and Ovarian Cancer

Professor of Cell Biology at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Ludwig Center at Harvard, Dr. Brugge is a pioneer in cancer biology whose discoveries on tumor initiation, drug resistance, and therapy response have redefined the field. Widely recognized as a builder of collaborative research communities and a mentor to countless young scientists, she received a Meritorious Award for her lifelong leadership in advancing breast and ovarian cancer research.



Karen H. Lu, MD

Institution: Moffitt Cancer Center

Research: Hereditary Gynecologic Cancers, Cancer Genetics, and Early Detection

A leading gynecologic oncologist, Dr. Lu has transformed prevention and early detection of hereditary cancers, including Lynch syndrome and BRCA-related ovarian and uterine cancers. Formerly Chair at MD Anderson and now Physician-in-Chief at Moffitt Cancer Center, she has trained a generation of scientists and clinicians. She was honored with a Meritorious Award for her paradigm-shifting work in cancer genetics and her commitment to mentorship.



Susan M. Domchek, MD

Institution: University of Pennsylvania, Basser Center for BRCA
Research: Cancer Genetics, BRCA-Associated Cancers, and Precision Prevention

Executive Director of the Basser Center for BRCA at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Domchek has revolutionized cancer prevention and treatment through genetics. Her work demonstrated the life-saving impact of risk-reducing surgeries and contributed to the development of PARP inhibitors for BRCA-associated cancers. Recognized for her vision, collaboration, and mentorship, she received a Meritorious Award for translating genetics into better outcomes for patients worldwide.



Martine J. Piccart, MD, PhD, FAACR

Institution: Institut Jules Bordet, Brussels
Research: Breast Cancer Clinical Trials and Global Research Collaboration

Scientific Director at Institut Jules Bordet in Brussels, Professor Piccart co-founded the Breast International Group (BIG), creating a global research network that transformed clinical trials in breast cancer. Her leadership has led to practice-defining studies and advanced personalized treatment worldwide. Honored with a Meritorious Award, she is celebrated for her visionary role in international collaboration and her lifelong commitment to improving care for women with breast and ovarian cancers.

“

The Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers grant enabled me to work on a risky project that could have potentially failed. At multiple stages I encountered set-backs with the project that without dedicated support from the grant could have meant that the project would have been deprioritized for other research. With the grant I was able to troubleshoot and ultimately overcome those set-backs and successfully generate a potential therapy for cancer.

Martina McDermott, PhD

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) guides the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers with scientific rigor and global expertise. The committee is co-chaired by Dr. Margaret Foti of the American Association for Cancer Research and Dr. Electra Paskett of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC – James). The SAC brings together 11 internationally recognized leaders in oncology, epidemiology, population sciences, and gynecologic cancers—true representatives of brilliance in their field.

This group reviews and selects grantees through a rigorous peer-review process, ensuring the VSGF supports the most promising and innovative research. Beyond grantmaking, SAC members also mentor emerging scientists, contribute their expertise to educational campaigns, and lend credibility and reach to amplify the VSGF's impact.

By combining scientific excellence with mentorship and advocacy, the SAC helps ensure that investments in women's cancer research not only drive discovery but also empower the next generation of leaders in the field.

Did You Know...

69,120 new endometrial cancer cases in 2025—diagnosis rates rising.

Scientific Advisory Council at a Glance

- **11 members** from leading cancer centers across the U.S. and internationally
- **Co-Chairs:** Dr. Margaret Foti (AACR) and Dr. Electra Paskett (OSUCCC – James)
- **Areas of expertise:** Oncology, Epidemiology, Population sciences, Gynecologic cancers, Immunology, Prevention and Survivorship
- **Key roles:**
 - Review and select grantees through rigorous peer review
 - Mentor emerging scientists
 - Contribute to education and awareness campaigns
 - Amplify the VSGF's impact through global networks
- **Diversity in leadership:** Members represent a range of disciplines, geographies, genders, and backgrounds



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S CANCER RESEARCH: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. ELECTRA PASKETT

As Co-Chair of the Scientific Advisory Council for the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers, Dr. Electra Paskett helps guide the rigorous review process that selects the most promising research to support. She ensures that early-career scientists—particularly women—gain the opportunities and resources needed to advance groundbreaking work in women's cancers. Her leadership reflects both her expertise in population sciences and her lifelong commitment to addressing health disparities.

Dr. Paskett is a Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at The Ohio State University College of Medicine, Deputy Director for Population Sciences and Community Outreach, and Director of the Center for Community Outreach & Engagement at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute.

Her perspective bridges science, leadership, and compassion, making her a powerful voice in advancing equity in cancer research and care. We sat down with Dr. Paskett to learn more about her work, what drives her, and her hopes for the future of women's health.

Why did you choose cancer research—and a specific focus on health disparities for women?

I didn't start out in cancer research. After working in a lab for several years, I realized I wanted to work closer to people and entered graduate school for epidemiology. Early in my career, I interviewed a woman who hadn't returned for follow-up after an abnormal Pap test. She explained that she was afraid of losing her womb, which she felt would make her "less of a woman." That conversation changed me. It showed how cultural beliefs, fear, and access barriers influence health decisions. From then on, I focused on interventions to reduce disparities and help people follow through with the care that saves lives.

In your own words, can you tell us what the Scientific Advisory Council does?

The Council manages the review of grant applications. It begins with letters of intent, which are scored by expert reviewers. Top proposals are invited to submit full applications, which are then critiqued and scored again. We discuss the most competitive applications on a review call before making funding decisions. Sometimes we invite promising applicants to revise and resubmit. The goal is to identify the most innovative, impactful work—whether in basic science, prevention, or population health—and ensure the strongest projects move forward.



Photo courtesy of AACR



What makes research on women's cancers essential?

For many years, women were underrepresented in clinical research—even for therapies that were commonly prescribed to women. There are cancers that only women develop, like cervical and uterine cancer, which means we have a responsibility to study these diseases directly and build solutions that reflect women's experiences.

Why invest in women researchers?

Women have historically had fewer opportunities for funding and advancement. When I arrived at Ohio State in 2002, I was only the 32nd woman to hold a full professorship in the College of Medicine. Funding is essential for career progression, so investing in women researchers helps level the playing field. It also brings more perspectives and innovative ideas into the science.

How does the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers make a difference?

Funding is difficult to secure right now and the VSGF fills a critical gap by providing resources that allow young investigators to gather pilot data, strengthen their proposals, and ultimately compete for larger grants. It gives them a real chance to launch and sustain their careers.

What advice would you give to future researchers?

It's not an easy time for research funding, so persistence is key. Work hard, seek out strong mentors, diversify your funding sources, and believe in yourself. Don't give up.

What gives you hope?

The rising generation of researchers who are dedicated to women's cancers gives me great hope. So does the passion of communities—anyone who attends Pelotonia sees how deeply people care about ending cancer. When we combine scientific expertise with community commitment, we truly move the needle.

What should everyone know about cancer prevention and early detection?

Know your family and personal health history. Pay attention to changes in your body, and advocate for yourself—if you don't feel heard, seek another opinion. Get recommended screenings and follow up on any abnormal results. In my own case, regular screening caught breast cancer early. Because of that, treatment was successful, and I'm here decades later. Screening and timely care save lives.



Photo courtesy of AACR

CLOSING

Hope is a powerful thing. It's what drives discovery, fuels determination and keeps us pushing forward, even when the challenges seem overwhelming. The Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers exists because we believe in that hope, and in the incredible women whose work brings it to life every day.

The VSGF isn't just about funding research. It's about creating impact and real, lasting change that transforms lives. It supports women scientists and doctors at the moments that matter most, moments where a little help can turn an idea into a breakthrough, a career into a legacy and a patient's future into one filled with possibility.

Already, we're witnessing that impact. We see it in the labs where innovation is breaking new ground. We see it in the confidence of women leaders stepping forward to change the face of cancer care. And most importantly, we see it in the hope kindled in patients and families around the world.

This journey is far from over, but every step forward reminds us why this work matters and why we are so grateful to be part of it. Together, we're building a future where women's cancers are met with courage, compassion and cures.

Thank you for believing in this mission and standing with us as we turn hope into action.

With gratitude and optimism,
Leslie Nixon
AVP of Community Relations, VS&Co

ABOUT

About Victoria's Secret & Co.

Victoria's Secret & Co. (NYSE: VSCO) is a specialty retailer of modern, fashion-inspired collections including signature bras, panties, lingerie, apparel, casual sleepwear, swim, lounge and sport as well as award-winning prestige fragrances and body care. VS&Co is comprised of market leading brands, Victoria's Secret and PINK, that share a common purpose of supporting women in all they do, and Adore Me, a technology-led, digital first innovative intimates brand serving women of all sizes and budgets at all phases of life. We are committed to empowering our more than 30,000 associates across a global footprint of approximately 1,380 retail stores in nearly 70 countries.

About Pelotonia

Pelotonia exists to engage, inspire, and challenge a community committed to change the world by accelerating innovative cancer research. Since its founding in 2008, Pelotonia has raised over \$339 million for cancer research which has been invested in high-impact breakthroughs in prevention, diagnostics and treatment, and recently, the launch of The Pelotonia Institute for Immuno-Oncology. Thanks to its generous funding partners, Pelotonia is able to direct 100 percent of every community-raised dollar to cancer research. For more information, visit www.pelotonia.org.

About the American Association for Cancer Research

Founded in 1907, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is the world's first and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research and its mission to prevent and cure cancer. AACR membership includes 49,000 laboratory, translational, and clinical researchers; population scientists; other health care professionals; and patient advocates residing in 126 countries. The AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise of the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer by annually convening more than 30 conferences and educational workshops—the largest of which is the AACR Annual Meeting, with more than 74,000 attendees for the 2020 virtual meetings and more than 22,500 attendees for past in-person meetings. In addition, the AACR publishes 10 prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals and a magazine for cancer survivors, patients, and their caregivers. The AACR funds meritorious research directly as well as in cooperation with numerous cancer organizations. As the Scientific Partner of Stand Up To Cancer, the AACR provides expert peer review, grants administration, and scientific oversight of team science and individual investigator grants in cancer research that have the potential for near-term patient benefit. The AACR actively communicates with legislators and other policymakers about the value of cancer research and related biomedical science in saving lives from cancer. For more information about the AACR, visit www.AACR.org.

NOTES

All statistics and trends in this section are from the American Cancer Society. (2025). Cancer Facts & Figures 2025. Atlanta: American Cancer Society. Retrieved from www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics.html

