



**GI Research
Foundation**

2024
Impact Report

FISCAL YEAR 2024
JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have much to celebrate as we welcome our 64th year of supporting research to enhance the lives of digestive disease patients everywhere.

We are excited to share our new brand, which reflects the very best of who we are. We are investors in science, providing independent funding for bold ideas at the earliest stages of discovery. We are proud collaborators with the world-renowned University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center.

Though we look different, our commitment to our mission is resolute.

This year, we invested over \$4.7 million in ideas with the power to ignite transformational change in care and research on the brink of breakthroughs. We welcomed nearly 1,000 individuals to our events, in person and virtually, bringing together our devoted community. We have sustained one of the largest and most comprehensive biobanks in the country. We transformed lives.

This incredible impact is only possible because of you—our donors, volunteers, clinicians, researchers, and friends. As a mother of a child with a digestive disease, I sincerely thank you.

I look forward to the year ahead as we continue to transform lives.

With gratitude,



Kathy Shafer
Board President





OUR MISSION

The GI Research Foundation works to treat, prevent, and cure digestive diseases. In collaboration with the physicians and scientists at the University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center, we fund innovative clinical and laboratory research, leading to groundbreaking discoveries that transform lives.

YOUR SUPPORT DRIVES OUR SUCCESS

1.6 million Americans, including as many as 80,000 children, are diagnosed with a digestive disease every year. Since 1961, the GI Research Foundation has invested in research accelerating new diagnostics, therapies, prevention strategies, and cures that bring hope to patients and families.

Groundbreaking Results

- *Discovery of the first gene associated with Crohn's disease*
- *Genetic and environmental factors impact on colorectal cancer*
 - *The first living donor transplant from parent to child*
 - *Immune factors' related to celiac disease*
 - *International trials which led to a cure for hepatitis C*
- *Sustaining one of the country's most comprehensive biobanks*

Bold Research Pipeline Highlights

- *Regenerative Medicine for Digestive Diseases campaign to transform patient care by undoing damage, restoring organ function, and regrowing healthy tissue*
- *Exploring intestinal microbiota transfer to treat digestive diseases*
 - *Using ultrasound technology to eliminate liver tumors*
 - *Novel therapeutic strategies for metastatic colorectal cancers*
- *Role of gut inflammation as a cause of anxiety and depression*

“ The goal in taking care of people who have a digestive illness is to provide them with an unrestricted quality of life, allowing them to do everything they want and more. The patient suffering from an illness is at the center of everything we do. Thankfully, the GI Research Foundation makes that possible.

- David T. Rubin, MD



THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT



\$4.78M
total funding



\$3.1M

CA CURE
Grants



\$715K

Research
Grants



\$962K

Technology &
Lab Investments

You Made This Year Possible.

2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Our collaboration with the world-renowned University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center ensures our success. Our independence allows us to provide early seed funding for novel ideas—dollars not typically available from other funding sources.

Marc Bissonnette, MD | \$75,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

DNA Methylation as a Biomarker of Ulcerative Colitis Dysplasia in primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC)

Bradford Chong, MD | \$25,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

Pancreatic Cancer Outcomes: The Role of Social Determinants of Health in an Urban Cohort

Orlando DeLeon, PhD | \$100,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

Examination of Gut Mucosal Populations and Dynamics During Region-specific Microbiota Transplants that Drive Persistent, Off-target Consequences to the Host

Cambrian Liu, PhD | \$100,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

Building Experimental Tools to Assess the Gut Microbiome's Effects on Gastrointestinal Regeneration

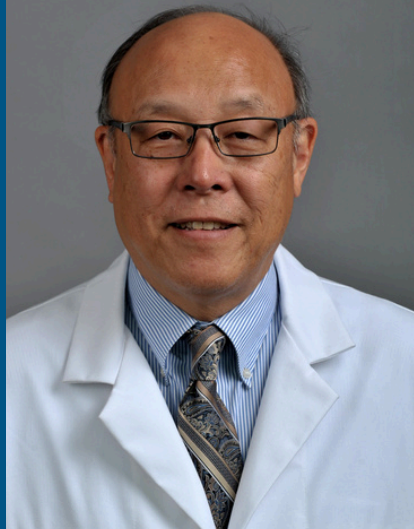


“ I was 13 when I was diagnosed. At that time, there weren't many treatments available. Because of research, there is now so much more. There is hope in knowing that if something doesn't work or fails, there are more treatment options available.

- Jenny Schack, UC patient

“ *The GI Research Foundation is willing to take risks, allowing investigators to explore areas that otherwise would be considered too risky. And, that has been the secret sauce. (The Foundation's) generosity has helped us get into uncharted areas.*

- Eugene B. Chang, MD



Matthew Odenwald, MD, PhD | \$70,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

Characterization Of Novel Bile Acids in Patients with Liver Disease

Kinga S. Olortegui, MD & Marita Kametas, MSN | \$30,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

Evaluating the Incidence of and Treatments for Peristomal Pyoderma Gangrenosum, a painful IBD complication

David T. Rubin, MD & Joëlle St-Pierre, MD, PhD | \$100,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

STOP-UC: De-Escalation of Therapy in Patients with Ulcerative Colitis with Histological Normalization and Rescue Through Autologous Fecal Microbiota Transplant

David Zemmour, MD, PhD | \$100,000 | Annual Grant Cycle

Understanding Colon-Specific Regulatory T Cells and their Cellular Crosstalk in Ulcerative Colitis

Edwin K. McDonald, IV, MD | \$75,000 | Donor-Directed Grant

Teaching Kitchen Changes the Gut Microbiome for Disease Prevention



“ Since my diagnosis in the early 2000s, so many treatment options and diagnostic tools have come and gone. That ultrasounds are now used for monitoring is wonderful. Knowing the researchers are looking into every facet of treating this disease gives me hope.

- Andrea Meyer, Crohn's disease patient

Elicio Therapeutics | \$2.6M | CA CURE

Support of Clinical Assessment of AMP-Peptide Vaccine Therapy.

In 2022, CA CURE launched with extraordinary support from anonymous donors. It is the largest funding program in the foundation's history, providing over \$22 million in support of advancing the understanding of GI cancers.

Andrea Berkemeyer, DO | \$10,000 | Young Investigators Award

Defining the Health of the Early Life Gut Microbiome through Functional Measures and Artificial Intelligence

Tenzin Choden, MD | \$10,000 | Young Investigators Award

Point-of-Care Ultrasound as a Sarcopenia Risk Assessment Tool in Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Alvin George, MD | \$10,000 | Young Investigators Award

The Use of Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence in Managing Anxiety in IBD Patients: a Pilot Study

William Roth, MD | \$9,760 | Young Investigators Award

The Gut Microbiome in Penetrating Brain Injury

TECHNOLOGY & GENERAL SUPPORT

Translational Core at UChicago Medicine | \$546,862

An innovative tissue bank that maintains a large registry of over 35,000 biospecimens drawn from over 10,000 patients. Unique to the UChicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center, and critical infrastructure for scientific inquiry.

Histotripsy | \$500,000

Robotic device that uses focused ultrasound waves to destroy cancer tissue without surgery, radiation, or needles.

Mass Spectrometer | \$347,750

Analytical instrument used to measure the mass-to-charge ratio of ions so that molecules in a sample can be identified with precision.

UC Fellows & Faculty Support | \$67,500

Funding in support of the UChicago Medicine GI fellows and faculty, which helps in recruiting top candidates from around the world.



“ We probably wouldn't have access to this technology for years without support of the GI Research Foundation. The rate-limiting step is always getting the funding, which is momentum lost. This process only took a few months and was seamless.

- Osman Ahmed, MD

Dr. Ahmed uses image-guided histotripsy to treat colon cancer that has spread to the liver.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

In 2022, the GI Research Foundation funded a study led by Benjamin McDonald, MD, PhD, focused on developing new diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for perianal Crohn's disease. This aggressive and debilitating form of Crohn's disease affects approximately 25% of CD patients.

The study investigates using ultrasound - a fast, convenient screening tool - for early detection of the disease, even before clinical symptoms appear. It is also examining the inflammatory pathways associated with the disease to identify new treatment strategies.

The progress of this project is remarkable.

To build on the success of Dr. McDonald's project, the GI Research Foundation provided funding for an additional intestinal ultrasound machine in September 2024.

This form of Crohn's disease is associated with more aggressive disease, a higher risk of surgery, higher rates of anxiety and depression, and sexual dysfunction. Despite aggressive medical and local therapy, up to 20 percent of patients require permanent ostomy.



“ No one has ever tried using ultrasound to identify patients with ‘subclinical’ (or asymptomatic) perianal Crohn’s disease. We are thrilled to see that we can identify these patients with ultrasound. We are really excited to see where we can take this research.

- Benjamin McDonald, MD, PhD

“ Ideas funded by the GI Research Foundation need support in the initial phases. They are often high risk and high reward. The work my lab does, I like to believe, is work that will be ‘high reward,’ but we need a funding mechanism to generate the data to be competitive at the federal level.

- Cambrian Y. Liu, PhD



Dr. Cambrian Liu and his team are studying abnormal organ regeneration patterns linked to chronic diseases, with a focus on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). **In 2022, the GI Research Foundation awarded Dr. Liu’s Lab \$100,000 in critical “seed funding” to investigate reprogramming stem cells to treat IBD.**

The ultimate goal of the study is to: 1) predict which IBD patients are at high risk for therapeutic non-response or relapse, 2) explore methods for transplanting stem cells to promote colonic healing, and 3) identify new patterns of stem cell renewal that could serve as potential targets for therapy.

The study has made significant progress.

In April 2023, the lab secured a highly competitive R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for this project.

The R01 grant is the most prestigious NIH award. "Seed funding" is crucial for researchers, allowing them to collect initial data or conduct pilot studies. These results can strengthen an R01 application, significantly enhancing the likelihood of securing NIH funding.

COMMUNITY

ANNUAL BALL

On Saturday, June 1, 2024, the Annual Ball welcomed more than 570 guests at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel in Chicago. Guests enjoyed music from the Gold Coast Allstars and a stand-up performance by comedian Kevin Nealon. The evening's program featured a presentation to Sy Taxman by David T. Rubin, MD, with the Joseph B. Kirsner Award. The Ball raised more than \$1.8 million for research to transform lives.





ALL-STAR CHALLENGE

The GI Research Foundation proudly presented the Larry A. Pogofsky All-Star Challenge on Monday, August 5, 2024, at Bryn Mawr Country Club in Lincolnwood, Illinois. A full field of golfers alongside celebrity athletes enjoyed a day on the greens honoring Larry's love for sports and continuing his legacy of funding critical medical research. The outing raised more than \$225,000 for groundbreaking digestive diseases research.

MOVING THE NEEDLE

On April 16, 2024, Moving the Needle hosted a night of education at the DoubleTree Hilton North Shore in Skokie, Illinois. Attendees learned about the most recently funded research projects.

VISCERAL: LISTEN TO YOUR GUT

The bi-monthly Visceral podcast, offers a valuable resource for those impacted by digestive diseases. Episode feature research updates, expert insights, and new treatment options.

FINANCIALS

Statement of Activity

Year-End June 30, 2024

Fundraising (Special Events)	\$2,136,086
Donations (Restricted)	\$3,427,596
Donations (Unrestricted)	\$426,461
Interest and Dividend Income	\$577,921
Gain/Loss on Investments	\$151,350
TOTAL REVENUES & SUPPORT	\$6,719,414

Grant Awards	\$4,779,468
Education & Mission Expenses	\$472,347
Fundraising & Event Expenses	\$660,935
Management and Admin	\$159,586
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,072,336

NET REVENUE	\$647,078
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“ The funding the Foundation provides is instrumental in this endeavor. We wouldn’t be able to do this without the support. It’s key to everybody in the Digestive Diseases Center.

- Joel Pekow, MD, on the Translational Core

86% of support went to research grants

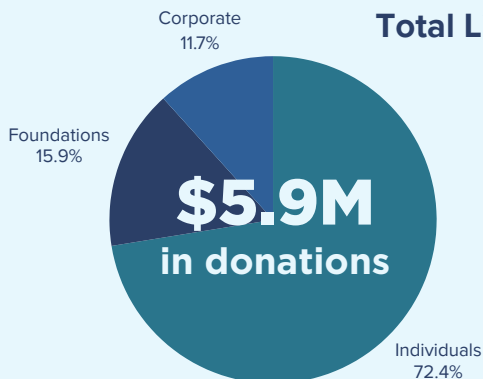
Statement of Financial Position Year-End June 30, 2024

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$451,345
Investments	\$10,670,717
Accounts Receivable	\$352,903
Prepaid Expenses	\$10,608
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$11,485,573

Accounts Payable*	\$6,853,529
Accrued Expenses	\$9,342
Deferred Revenue	\$118,000
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$6,980,871

*Committed research grant expenses

Without Donor Restrictions	\$4,504,702
With Donor Restrictions	-
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$4,504,702



Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$11,485,573

LEADERSHIP

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