



January 2023

Dear friends,

Happy New Year! I am writing to thank you for believing in Miles for Myeloma and for your support of our mission to make myeloma history.

In 2005, we started with a modest dream: to inform people about this nasty disease and support research efforts aimed at overcoming it. Today, when I look at our myeloma program at the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center, I feel proud and hopeful. We have built an excellent team and can offer new drugs to patients that will have a significant impact on the length and quality of their lives.

Myeloma is a cancer that has been difficult to eliminate. Every time we have a new drug, the myeloma cells resist it. The good news is, I think we are about to outsmart it using a patient's own immune system as a weapon. Yes, the patient's own immune system!

We see promise with two types of immunotherapies. The first is called CAR T cells. We genetically modify a patient's own immune cells to become myeloma killer cells and then give them back to the patient to attack their myeloma. We are seeing amazing results. Unfortunately, these results are not long lasting. We want to understand why so that we can ensure CAR T cells will work long enough to eliminate every myeloma cell in every patient. Our goal is to hire someone to join our team who is equipped to focus on this very important piece of the puzzle. We are hopeful that a donor will fund an endowment to allow us to recruit a world-class researcher and further this work.

A second type of immunotherapy uses drugs that enter a patient's body and lure myeloma cells closer to the immune cells. We call this type of immunotherapy Bispecific T cell engager. This has worked like magic in many of our patients who participated in the clinical trials at our cancer center.

Why am I hopeful? In my many years of clinical research, I have never seen such amazing results. The beauty of these immunotherapies is how effective they are. Our challenge is better management of some of the side effects. We also need to maintain the efficacy for a long time. We need more science. We will expand our team to include physician scientists capable of navigating the biology of immunotherapies. I am convinced we can make these two types of immunotherapies more effective and much safer. When we achieve this goal, we can use them earlier in the course of the disease. I believe this is the formula to cure myeloma.

My dear Miles for Myeloma friends, let us keep our focus on curing myeloma. Together we can achieve that.

In September we gathered for the 18th annual Miles for Myeloma Patient Education Symposium. It was wonderful to see so many new and old friends. If you were not able to make it and want to watch a recording of the video, email m4m@iu.edu to be part of our email list.

Every year I'm astounded by the generosity of our patients, their families and our many supporters. Our 2022 campaign year was especially remarkable. At the date of this letter, our efforts have raised more than \$1.1 million for myeloma research and enhanced patient care. Your contribution is helping us make myeloma history.

Sending you wishes for health and happiness in the year ahead.

Peace,



Rafat Abonour, M.D.
Harry and Edith Gladstein Professor of Cancer Research



I'm grateful to our pharmaceutical partners who continue to make our events possible, including:
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