



T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence



Second philanthropic investment will enhance and expand the leading center for Melanoma diagnosis, treatment and research in the Southwest.

The [T.W. Lewis Foundation](#) recently made a \$3 million philanthropic gift to expand the T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence at [Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center](#). The Melanoma Center was established at Banner MD Anderson's main campus in Gilbert, Ariz., thanks to a \$2 million gift from the T.W. Lewis Foundation in 2016 and support from community partners and donors.

Since opening in November 2017, the T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence has treated more than 1,900 new patients with melanoma, with total patient visits topping 22,000. The research team has launched five new melanoma clinical trials, giving patients access to some of the most promising new treatments and helping to advance medical discoveries to potentially benefit future patients. With a dedicated vehicle wrapped with T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence branding and a shade canopy, the community outreach team has held more than 250 events reaching some 110,000 people on the topics of sun safety, skin cancer prevention, and the importance of screening.

T.W. Lewis Foundation's gift will expand the melanoma program to new clinical sites across the Valley, including the northwest valley and central Phoenix, to care for Arizona's growing population of melanoma patients. Funding will support recruitment and hiring of nurse navigators and research and data coordinators, as well as expansion of the community outreach program to bring melanoma education, screening, and advocacy information to more people in the community. Funds will also assist patients with the cost of genomic profiling and will support professional education of health care providers across the country on the topic of melanoma and skin cancer.

Part of this gift will support the clinical trials program and dedicated research staff to coordinate with local and national partners to help advance melanoma research. Thanks to immunotherapy drugs discovered in clinical trials in recent years, patients with metastasizing melanoma now have new hope for a disease that just 10 years ago, claimed the lives of 95% of those diagnosed.

This gift is highly personal for Tom Lewis, founder and CEO of the Phoenix-based real estate investment company T.W. Lewis Company and the T.W. Lewis Foundation. Lewis lost his father after a 10-year battle with melanoma at the age of 66 and then faced the same diagnosis himself, receiving treatment at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

"I'm a grateful patient who had the life-changing experience of having melanoma, so I understand the fears and concerns of people who have the disease," said Lewis. "We made our first gift to create a place in Arizona where people could go and feel confident they're in a competent hospital. I have the greatest respect for both MD Anderson and Banner MD Anderson, and am so proud to be a supporter of theirs in this endeavor. We're off to a great start and we want to grow this program in Arizona to increase the number of patients we serve, and that's what we're going to achieve with this gift." The American Cancer Society estimates more than 2,900 new cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in Arizona this year—and melanoma has become one of the most common cancers in young adults. Since 90% of melanoma cases are related to sun exposure, and Arizona is the sunniest U.S. state, there is no better place to continue waging war on this disease.

"Melanoma is the sixth-most common cancer in the United States and rates of diagnosis for the disease have increased dramatically over the past three decades, outpacing almost all other cancers," says Dr. Mark Gimbel, Medical Director for the T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence. "As cases of the disease continue to rise, it is imperative that patients can access experts in this field to properly diagnose and treat the disease, as well as clinical trials that give patients additional treatment options. We are grateful to Tom and Jan for this investment that will allow us to expand the melanoma program, reach more Arizonans with skin cancer prevention education and care, and advance our research efforts."

"On behalf of everyone at Banner MD Anderson, I want to thank Tom and Jan Lewis for their continued support and investment in the T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence, a true point of pride for Banner Health," said Dr. Matthew Callister, Senior Physician Executive at Banner MD Anderson. "We are proud to have cared for so many melanoma patients since their first investment in this work in 2016, and we are honored to have the chance to expand this program to reach even more patients."

Formed in 2000 by Tom and Jan Lewis, the T.W. Lewis Foundation has provided leadership and financial support to dozens of nonprofits that help children and families in need. The foundation has also provided college scholarships to over 200 future leaders and supported youth education organizations that build character and encourage civic engagement.

Opened in 2011, Banner MD Anderson delivers cancer care to patients in Arizona through an affiliation between Banner Health and MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Click below to support the T.W. Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence with a tax-deductible gift. (Choose Banner MD Anderson TW Lewis Melanoma Center of Excellence from the Gift Designation menu).