



For Immediate Release:

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Contact: Millie Occhionero

Director of Marketing and Communications
Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI)
315-624-7475
518-530-8921
mocchionero@mmri.edu

**Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI) Awarded \$200,000 by
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc. (LADA)**

Funding to support four innovative research projects in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)

UTICA, N.Y. – On Thursday, August 17, 2023, officials from MMRI received a surprise announcement by LADA President and CEO, Kathleen Arntsen, that its three previously supported SLE research projects would receive an additional \$50,000 each this year, plus an additional \$50,000 would be allocated for a fourth new endeavor. The check was presented at LADA’s 23rd Lupus Charity Golf Classic, located at Shenendoah Golf Course at Turning Stone Resort Casino, Verona, New York.

“As an organization led by individuals who are directly impacted by lupus, we are honored to support quality, groundbreaking lupus research,” stated Kathleen A. Arntsen, president & CEO at LADA. “We are thrilled that a premier research facility such as MMRI exists locally and look forward to advancing breakthroughs.”

The MMRI research funded by LADA is focused on preventing and treating SLE, a devastating autoimmune disease that causes the immune system to attack a person’s own tissue, causing inflammation in the skin, joints, blood, heart, lungs, brain and kidneys, and leads to extreme exhaustion, fevers, skin rashes, hair loss and anemia.

Specifically, MMRI scientists will identify how increased activity of specific biological enzymes in the body can affect progression and pathogenesis of SLE; identify new ways to target and treat lupus nephritis; develop and use novel therapeutic agents for the treatment of SLE; study how immune cell activity in SLE can lead to the development of venous thromboembolism.

“Our research endeavors are making tremendous strides in the fight against SLE,” said Maria Kontaridis, Ph.D., executive director and Gordon K. Moe professor and chair of biomedical research and translational medicine at MMRI. “We are extremely grateful to LADA for their commitment, partnership and support of our work.”

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The year's gift brings LADA's total support of MMRI to \$415,000. LADA has been a proud sponsor of MMRI research since 1990.

On Friday, May 19, 2023, MMRI dedicated a new laboratory space in its newly renovated building, specifically for SLE research, in appreciation of LADA's dedication to continued research in lupus and allied diseases and for its advocacy of patients.

“Our partnership with LADA is invaluable and the need for continued research to find the cause of SLE is critically needed. MMRI aims identify new ways to treat, and hopefully cure this disease,” said Kontaridis.

To learn more about MMRI, visit mmri.edu. To learn more about LADA, visit ladainc.org.

Photo attached (from left to right): Terri Cronin, executive assistant at MMRI; Nicole Knoblock, events coordinator at MMRI; Samantha Le Sommer, Ph.D., postdoctoral fellow at MMRI; Colleen LeFever, marketing associate at MMRI; Chase Kessinger, Ph.D., assistant professor of cardiovascular medicine at MMRI; Kathleen Arntsen, president and CEO at LADA; Robert Hewson, DPM, board president at MMRI; Zhiqiang Lin, Ph.D., assistant professor at MMRI; Millie Occhionero, director of marketing and communications at MMRI.

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About LADA: The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc., was founded in 1978 and is a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for those impacted by lupus and allied diseases and other conditions of unmet need by fostering collaboration among stakeholders, promoting unity in the community, and supporting innovative advocacy, education, awareness and biomedical research program initiatives.

About MMRI: MMRI is a non-profit dedicated to scientific research that improves the health and quality of life for all humankind. We conduct high quality research aimed at developing a deeper understanding of the causes of cardiovascular, neurocognitive and autoimmune diseases, in the hopes of identifying innovative treatments and cures for these devastating ailments.