



BOLD

REPORT

25+ YEARS OF IMPACT

Science. Innovation. Achievement.



VASCULITIS
FOUNDATION®



VASCULITIS FOUNDATION

Science. Innovation. Achievement.

WHAT IS V-BOLD?

V-BOLD: Vasculitis – Building Outcomes, Leading Discoveries is an integrated research initiative advancing vasculitis care through three core programs:

VF Research Program provides seed funding for pilot and early-stage studies, helping investigators generate critical data and build careers in vasculitis research. Established in 1999 in honor of a young patient with GPA, the program has funded more than 80 studies totaling over \$3 million since 2002, including the Young Investigator Award, which supports early-career researchers with up to \$50,000 over two years.

VCRC-VF Fellowship is a partnership between the Vasculitis Clinical Research Consortium and the VF that offers up to two years of mentored training for physician-investigators pursuing clinical and translational vasculitis research. Since 2005, 30 fellows have trained at leading North American centers, building a workforce essential to early diagnosis, effective treatment, and improved patient outcomes.

Vasculitis Patient-Powered Research Network (VPPRN) connects patients, clinicians, and researchers to conduct high-quality, patient-centered research. Powered by community support, the VPPRN has grown into an international registry with 5,000+ participants from more than 90 countries, earning global recognition and expanding VF's leadership in patient-focused research.

Together, these programs are the cornerstone of a global network of expert investigators and care centers – advancing research, strengthening the clinical workforce, and improving the lives of people with vasculitis.

We are pleased to share this report highlighting the impact and accomplishments of our researchers and fellows over the past 10 years. To review the complete 25-year history of our research and fellowship initiatives, please visit vasculitisfoundation.org/vf-funded-research.

ADVANCING RESEARCH. STRENGTHENING CARE. CHANGING LIVES.

In 2018, Brian Goldman lost his wife, Jen, to vasculitis, leaving him and their son, Brandon, to navigate life after her loss. He shares his perspective as a husband, father, and now President of the VF Board of Directors.

“Research is more than just data and studies – it’s the key to unlocking hope for the future.”

To me, it’s about finding solutions that could have saved my wife, and preventing others from experiencing the same loss. Every breakthrough brings us one step closer to a world where vasculitis no longer takes lives, and that’s why I’m dedicated to supporting research.”



Jen & Brian Goldman with their son, Brandon



Jessica Olona, Age 6

FROM ONE FAMILY’S APPEAL TO A GLOBAL RESEARCH IMPACT

The VF Research Program was launched in July 1999 at the request of Nancy Olona, who urged the WGA (now VF) Board of Directors to create a research initiative to complement its awareness and education efforts. Nancy made the appeal on behalf of her then six-year-old niece, Jessica, diagnosed with GPA just seven months earlier. Over the next three years, Nancy, her family, and friends raised more than \$50,000 to support the new program and the first grant was awarded in 2002.

To date, the VF has funded over 80 studies and \$3 million in research. Over the past two decades, vasculitis research has evolved from scattered clinical observations into a growing field of targeted, translational science.

The VF, celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2026, has played a pivotal role in that evolution – particularly by investing in early-career researchers and fellows. These efforts reflect a larger historical trend in rare disease advocacy: recognizing that breakthroughs often begin with foundational support for promising new minds.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

VF's First Grant Award

The VF awarded its first research grant in 2002 to **Alex Villa-Forte**, MD, MPH, a fellow at the Cleveland Clinic Center, and her mentor, Gary S. Hoffman, MD, MS, MACR, for their study *"Short-term Cyclophosphamide Therapy in a Cohort of Over 200 Wegener's Granulomatosis Patients."*

This landmark 12-year retrospective analysis showed that shorter treatment courses followed by methotrexate could effectively control severe disease while reducing long-term toxicity, helping to change the standard of care. The findings were published in *Medicine* in 2007.



Alex Villa-Forte, MD, MPH

Dr. Villa-Forte's work has influenced clinical practice through studies comparing treatments for granulomatosis with polyangiitis (GPA) and identifying the high risk of recurrent venous thrombosis. A committed educator and mentor, she credits the VF's early support as pivotal to her career and continues to advocate for investment in research, training, and expert care.

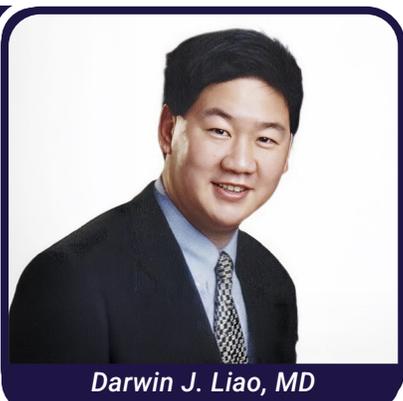
In October 2025, Dr. Villa-Forte joined the VF Board of Directors, bringing her clinical expertise and long-standing commitment to the vasculitis community into a leadership role focused on advancing patient-centered strategy.

THE POWER OF DONOR IMPACT



Pamela and Ilya Peckerman

The **Ilya Peckerman Fellowship Award**, established in 2010 by Ilya's daughter, Pamela, and their family and friends, funds global vasculitis research and fellowships to expand expertise and access to care. The fellowship supports promising young physicians in nephrology, pulmonology, dermatology, rheumatology, and other fields.



Darwin J. Liao, MD

The **Darwin James Liao, MD, Memorial Fellowship** —established by Dr. Liao's family — supported Dr. Eric J. Gapud's 2019 fellowship at the Johns Hopkins Vasculitis Center. Now a Clinical Team Leader in the FDA's Division of Rheumatology and Transplant Medicine, Dr. Gapud studied immune mechanisms beyond cell-killing, suggesting current ANCA-associated vasculitis (AAV) models may be incomplete. His goal is to subtype patients based on immune profiles, enabling personalized therapy selection.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Unanswered Scientific Questions: Prioritize research into the causes of vasculitis, personalized treatments to prevent relapse, and, ultimately, a cure.

Training and Education Needs: Expand educational outreach to general practitioners and other specialists to shorten the time to diagnosis. Continue growing the fellowship program to build a robust pipeline of experts.

Global Care Delivery: Develop innovative models to deliver specialized care to patients in rural and underserved areas, including low- and middle-income countries.

VCRC-VF Fellowship Program Points of Pride

Our VCRC-VF fellows have become the next generation of vasculitis experts, leading in vasculitis patient care, research, and centers around the world.



650+
Published
Papers



Now Practicing in
10
Countries



30
Fellows
Trained

VF-Funded Research Points of Pride

VF's global research network demonstrates our commitment to advancing vasculitis research and fostering international collaboration.



\$3M
Awarded



20+
Countries
On 4 Continents



80+
Studies
Funded

MEET OUR 2025-2026 YOUNG INVESTIGATORS



Audra Horomanski

MD



**RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2025**

Stanford University School
of Medicine

Palo Alto, California

*Nationwide Analysis of
Intrahepatic Cholestasis of
Pregnancy in Patients with
Systemic Vasculitis*

Dr. Horomanski is the Director of the Stanford Vasculitis Clinic and Program Director of the Rheumatology Fellowship at Stanford University. Her research addresses critical gaps in evidence-based guidance for patients with vasculitis who are navigating pregnancy and family planning, aiming to expand understanding of pregnancy outcomes and improve care.

“For a long time, patients with vasculitis were advised not to pursue pregnancy due to the use of medications harmful to the fetus or disease manifestations that made pregnancy very high risk,” Dr. Horomanski said. “Improvements in therapy have really opened up the reproductive opportunities for our patients, but we are still lacking in knowledge on how to best counsel and monitor them during their pregnancy.”



Patrick Taus
MD, PhD



**RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2025**

University of North Carolina
Kidney Center

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

*Genome-wide Identification
of ANCA Autoantigen
Regulators*

Dr. Taus is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at the UNC – Chapel Hill School of Medicine. His research focuses on developing targeted treatments for ANCA vasculitis. Current therapies broadly suppress the immune system, increasing the risk of serious infections and long-term steroid-related side effects. He studies how antibodies targeting proteinase-3 or myeloperoxidase abnormally activate white blood cells, causing blood vessel inflammation, organ damage, and sometimes death.

“My goal is to help bring patients closer to a future where they no longer have to fear the devastating side effects of current therapies,” Dr. Taus shared.

MEET OUR 2025-2026 YOUNG FELLOWS



Florian Käs
MD



FELLOW
2025-27

University of Pennsylvania,
Penn Rheumatology
Vasculitis Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dr. Käs's interest in vasculitis began during his medical training at the University Hospital of Zürich, Switzerland, where a strong focus on nephrology gave him a solid foundation in both systemic and organ-specific manifestations of vasculitis. Drawn by the field's diagnostic and therapeutic challenges and the opportunity to improve patient care, he chose to pursue rheumatology.

Over the next two years, Dr. Käs aims to become a well-rounded clinician-researcher, advancing the diagnosis, management, and understanding of vasculitis while actively engaging with the international vasculitis community and its experts and patient advocates.



Yuan Qi
MD



FELLOW
2025-27

Division of Rheumatology,
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Dr. Qi's interest in vasculitis began during internal medicine training, after treating a critically ill patient with suspected AAV transferred overnight from a small hospital. Then-current guidelines supported plasmapheresis for patients with rapidly worsening lung and kidney disease, and the team proceeded with treatment.

Just one year later, the PEXIVAS trial showed no added benefit of plasmapheresis—leaving a lasting impression on Dr. Qi. *"It showed how quickly the vasculitis field evolves and incorporates new evidence into care,"* he said.

Drawn by this dynamic nature, Dr. Qi's research now focuses on optimizing steroid use in vasculitis, balancing efficacy with side effects, with the goal of advancing more personalized, risk-based treatment approaches that improve patient outcomes.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



Cecilia Barnini
MD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2024

Medical University of Innsbruck,
University Medical Center
Groningen

Austria/Netherlands

Kidney Involvement in
ANCA-Associated Vasculitis

Continuing the global collaboration ethos born from the COVID pandemic, **Dr. Barnini** is studying kidney biopsies to compare AAV with other renal diseases. Her goal is to uncover disease mechanisms that may lead to earlier, personalized interventions.

This work echoes the shift in medical science from symptom control to root-cause exploration, a defining movement in modern immunology.



Ruoning "Lemon" Ni
MD



FELLOW
2024-25

Cleveland Clinic Center for
Vasculitis Care and Research

Now:

Clinical Assistant Professor,
Rheumatology

University of Iowa Health Care
Iowa City, Iowa

As a fellow, **Dr. Ni** gained advanced clinical expertise through case-based learning with world leaders and hands-on multidisciplinary vasculitis care. Mentored by experts, she refined skills in early complication recognition, team-based care, and management of complex cases.

Her research explored organ-specific manifestations of AAV and temporal artery ultrasound in giant cell arteritis (GCA), identifying meaningful variability across care settings.

Dr. Ni credits VF support for providing the mentorship, protected time, and resources needed to conduct high-impact research, and highlights the vital role donor investment plays in advancing vasculitis care.



Pei-Yu Chen
BS, MS, PhD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2023

Yale University

New Haven, Connecticut

siRNA Nanoparticle Therapy
Targeting TGFβ in
Endothelial Cells

During her research, **Dr. Chen** discovered that TGF-beta, normally a protective signal, can drive blood vessel damage in AAV when dysregulated, explaining how vascular inflammation develops. The team also developed a precision treatment using lipid nanoparticles to deliver therapy directly to the vessel lining, reducing inflammation and promoting healing.

By targeting root causes while keeping patients central, this research opens new paths for safer, more effective vasculitis treatments.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



**David
Massicotte-Azarniouch**
MD, MSC, FRCPC, DRCPSC



**RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2023**

University of Ottawa

Ottawa, Canada

*Steroid-sparing Approaches in
AAV (SAFE-T trial)*

This study tackled one of vasculitis care's most persistent problems: over-reliance on high-dose steroids. **Dr. Massicotte** sought to validate a globally accessible, low-steroid protocol using existing immunosuppressants — critical in making safer treatment a realistic standard of care worldwide, not just in wealthy nations.

This research represents a significant effort to overturn decades of high-dose steroid reliance in AAV treatment.



Mats Junek
MD, MSC, FRCPC



**FELLOW
2023-24**

McMaster University, Vasculitis
Research Group

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Now:

McMaster University,
Vasculitis & Rheumatology at
McMaster University MVRG

Through his fellowship, **Dr. Junek** gained the mentorship, resources, and protected time to become a clinician-scientist with advanced research skills, clinical expertise, and a global network. His work has improved diagnosis in GCA and refined relapse risk assessment in AAV, supporting more informed treatment decisions.

He further extends this impact through international MRI collaborations and physician education, underscoring the vital role of donor support for early-career investigators in advancing patient-centered vasculitis research.



Mohanad Elfishawi
MBBCH, MS



**FELLOW
FUNDED: 2022-23**

Mayo Clinic Rochester

Now:

Assistant Professor of
Medicine, Division of
Rheumatic &
Autoimmune Diseases
University of Minnesota

Dr. Elfishawi's fellowship deepened his understanding of vasculitis and the value of multidisciplinary, patient-centered care through mentorship across key specialties. At the University of Minnesota, he has applied this training by co-founding a dedicated vasculitis clinic and establishing a patient cohort, expanding care for an underserved population.

His research identifying long-term aortic aneurysm risk in GCA has influenced monitoring practices worldwide, illustrating how VF-supported training drives lasting improvements in patient care and clinical practice.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



Marta Casal Moura
MD, MSC, MSPH, PhD



FELLOW
2022–23

Mayo Clinic

Rochester, Minnesota

Now:
Doctor of Medicine, Consultant
in Clinical Immunology
Porto, Portugal

Dr. Casal Moura's fellowship provided specialized training unavailable in Portugal, preparing her to manage complex vasculitis cases and lead impactful research. Her work has influenced treatment for severe kidney involvement in AAV, clarified the role of plasma exchange, and improved outcome prediction.

She continues laboratory research in PR3-ANCA vasculitis and expands global access by translating VF patient education materials, reflecting how donor support advances patient-centered care worldwide.



Lynn A. Fussner
MD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2021

The Ohio State University

Columbus, Ohio

Monocytes, PR3, & Alpha-1
Antitrypsin in AAV

Dr. Fussner's project investigated how genetics and immune signaling contribute to disease activity and treatment response. This research aligns with current trends toward biomarker discovery and genotype-guided care, reflecting how patient-tailored approaches are reshaping chronic disease management, even in rare autoimmune diseases like vasculitis.

AAV treatment has relied on empirical approaches; this project signals a new era of biomarker-driven, precision medicine for vasculitis.



Solbritt
Rantapää Dahlqvist
MD, PhD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2019

Umeå University

Stockholm, Sweden

Pre-clinical AAV Development
via Microbiome, Antibodies,
& Genetics

This landmark study examined blood samples collected years before disease onset, comparing individuals who later developed AAV with matched healthy controls. By analyzing microbial DNA, antibodies, and protein markers, the team aimed to identify early predictors of disease.

This work was among the first to explore preclinical autoimmune disease trajectories in vasculitis, with the potential to enable earlier intervention or even prevention — once considered unreachable.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



Maria C. Cid
MD



**RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2021**

Hospital Clinic

Barcelona, Spain

*Predictors of Response to
Tocilizumab (IL-6 blockade)
in GCA*

Tocilizumab (TCZ, Actemra®) was a breakthrough treatment for GCA, enabling reduced steroid use, yet 40% of patients relapsed on TCZ. **Dr. Cid's** study investigated arterial tissue responses to TCZ and sought biomarkers to predict treatment effectiveness, reducing trial-and-error prescribing.

This work addressed the critical need to understand why biologic therapies work for some patients and not others — a defining challenge of 21st-century rheumatology.



Sebastian E. Sattui
MD, MS



**FELLOW
2019–21**

Hospital for Special Surgery

Now:

*Assistant Professor,
Division of Rheumatology
& Clinical Immunology,
Director, UPMC
Vasculitis Center,
University of Pittsburgh*

Dr. Sattui credits his fellowship with providing the dedicated time and support that shaped his career as a clinician-researcher. He developed deep expertise in vasculitis care, particularly in older adults. His research focuses on frailty and geriatric syndromes in vasculitis and polymyalgia rheumatica (PMR).

He serves on the VF Board of Directors, contributes to patient and VPPRN educational materials, and is a member of the VF Medical Education and Research Committee.



Alvise Berti
MD, PhD



**FELLOW
2019–21**

Mayo Clinic

Rochester, Minnesota

Now:

*Consultant, University of Trento,
Santa Chiara Hospital
Trento, Italy*

Dr. Berti describes his vasculitis fellowship as “*fundamental*” to his career. Made possible by donor support, the two-year program provided advanced training in study design, data analysis, and mentorship through the VCRC–VF program. This experience connected him to a global network of physician-scientists and enabled research that advanced understanding of vasculitis prognosis, including renal and respiratory involvement, and clarified B cell mechanisms in AAV.

Since returning to Italy, Dr. Berti has applied this training as a regional expert, supporting physicians managing complex cases and improving coordinated patient care. His career demonstrates how donor-supported training multiplies impact worldwide.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



Dan Jane-Wit
MD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2018

Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut
Endothelial Cell Inflammasomes
in ANCA-Associated Vasculitis

During his research, **Dr. Jane-Wit** gained expertise in translational methodologies to study human immune responses in vasculitis. One of the outcomes of his work was the discovery of a gene called ZFYVE21, which he is now studying for its role in vascular inflammation.

This work reflects a broader shift in vasculitis research toward molecular, data-driven approaches that link patient care with targeted therapeutic discovery.



Laura Moi
MD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2018

European Vasculitis Society/
EUVAS
Long-Term Outcomes
in ANCA Vasculitis–
EUVAS Inception Cohort

Dr. Moi reviewed data from more than 900 AAV patients enrolled in nine landmark European Vasculitis Society (EUVAS) trials from 1995–2010. She analyzed outcomes including cancer risk, renal function, drug exposure, relapse, and mortality — data critical to shaping future guidelines.

This work transformed historical clinical trial data into a predictive tool for 21st-century risk modeling for long-term outcomes and predictors of adverse events for AAV patients.



Sonia Sharma
PhD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2018

La Jolla Institute
for Immunology
La Jolla, California
Metabolic Dysregulation
in DADA2 Vasculitis

Dr. Sharma's team explored how loss of ADA2 enzyme function disrupts immune metabolism in DADA2, a rare genetic vasculitis. This study aimed to reveal metabolism-targeted therapies that dampen proinflammatory pathways across multiple vasculitis syndromes.

This study positions vasculitis as a metabolic disorder — a paradigm-shifting concept with potential relevance beyond rare monogenic forms.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



Mary H. Foster
MD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2017

Duke University
Raleigh, North Carolina
*Humanized Models of
Gene-Environment Interactions
in ANCA Vasculitis*

Dr. Foster's study aimed to develop the first dual-humanized animal model of AAV exposed to environmental triggers (e.g., silica) – incorporating both human immune cells and human susceptibility genes.

This was the first scalable model for studying real-world gene-environment interaction in vasculitis, crucial for drug development and prevention research.



Nataliya Milman
MD, MSc, FRCPC

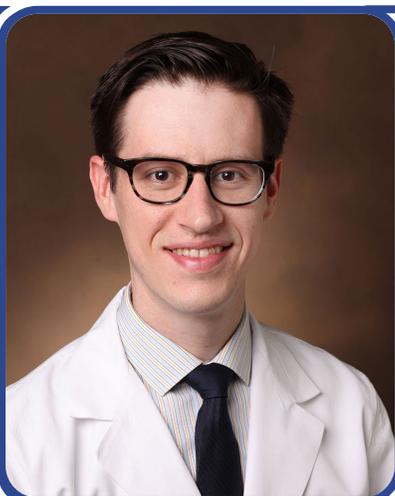


RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2017

Ottawa Hospital Research
Institute, Canada
*Finalize an Updated ICF Core
Set for ANCA-Associated
Vasculitis*

Dr. Milman used a three-round survey to gather input from patients, caregivers, clinicians, researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers. Participants prioritized AAV-related outcomes for clinical trials, resulting in an ICF-based AAV Core Set endorsed by at least 70% of participants in one or more groups.

This effort ensures that future clinical trials reflect outcomes that matter most to patients and help guide more patient-centered vasculitis research and treatment evaluation.



Kevin Byram
MD



FELLOW
2017-18

Cleveland Clinic Center for
Vasculitis Care and Research

Now:
*Associate Professor of Medicine,
Department of Medicine,
Division of Rheumatology and
Immunology, Co-director
Vanderbilt Vasculitis Center*

Dr. Byram's fellowship delivered lasting impact, providing advanced training, mentorship, and confidence to lead Tennessee's only dedicated vasculitis center. Guided by Dr. Carol Langford at the Cleveland Clinic, the fellowship enabled nationally influential contributions, including the 2021 ACR/VF Vasculitis Guidelines.

His career shows how early support creates new centers of care, broader access, and higher standards nationwide. Now a past president and current VF Board member, Dr. Byram continues to give back by co-chairing the Medical Education and Research Committee.

MEET MORE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOWS



Divi Cornec
MD, PhD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2017

*Mayo Clinic Rochester
& Brest University, France
PR3-Specific B Cells in AAV*

Dr. Cornec's study characterized the PR3-specific B cells responsible for generating ANCA autoantibodies. Using a novel detection method, Dr. Cornec aspired to determine whether these B cells predict relapse risk, potentially guiding personalized use of B-cell-depleting drugs.

This was the first project to track ANCA-producing B cells in real time – a possible future biomarker for individualized therapy decisions.



Mark Gorelik
MD



RESEARCHER
FUNDED: 2017

*Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, Texas
Follistatin-Like-1 Blockade
in Kawasaki Disease*

Dr. Gorelik targeted Follistatin-like-1, a molecule found elevated in children who develop coronary aneurysms in Kawasaki disease. Blocking this molecule may prevent long-term heart complications.

This project aimed to revolutionize Kawasaki care by stopping aneurysm development early, replacing the current one-size-fits-all approach with targeted intervention.



Kaitlin Quinn
MD



FELLOW
2010-12

*Mount Sinai Hospital,
University of Toronto, Canada*

Now:
*Staff Clinician, National
Institutes of Health;
Associate Director,
Rheumatology
Fellowship Program*

Dr. Quinn's fellowship offered hands-on experience with vasculitis patients well beyond standard rheumatology training, as well as robust research instruction in statistics and data analysis. Participation in the VCRC expanded her professional network and inspired her to earn a master's degree in clinical research. She now treats patients, conducts research – particularly on imaging for large-vessel vasculitis – and shares her expertise at national and international forums.

“Completing a vasculitis fellowship was the most important factor in my current career path,” she says, crediting donor support for making this specialized training possible.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO EXPERT CARE AROUND THE WORLD

Where our fellows landed!

A key goal of the VCRC-VF Fellowship is to train physician-investigators not only to provide exceptional care and conduct groundbreaking research – but also to establish new vasculitis programs in underserved regions. This global network of trained specialists is a testament to the power of focused investment in medical education. By equipping fellows with the tools and mentorship they need, we are not only improving outcomes for today's patients – we are building a legacy of care that will reach further and faster for generations to come.

Children's Hospital Colorado, Aurora

*Cleveland Clinic Center for
Vasculitis Care and Research, Ohio*

Clínica Alemana de Santiago, Chile

Clinical Immunology, Porto, Portugal

Georgia Rheumatology Clinic, Tyrone

Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

Kantonsspital St. Gallen, Switzerland

Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

*National Institutes of Health,
Bethesda, Maryland*

*Sierra Pacific Arthritis & Rheumatology
Centers, Fresno, California*

*The Johns Hopkins Hospital,
Baltimore, Maryland*

*University of British Columbia,
Vancouver, Canada*

University of Calgary, Canada

University of California - Los Angeles

University of Iceland, Reykjavik

*University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics,
Iowa City*

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

University of Montreal, Canada

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

*UT Health Austin Rheumatology Clinic
and Musculoskeletal Institute, Texas*

University of Toronto, Canada

*University of Trento, Santa Chiara Hospital,
Italy*

*Vanderbilt University,
Nashville, Tennessee*

*Sierra Pacific Arthritis and Rheumatology
Centers, California*



VASCULITIS PATIENT-POWERED RESEARCH NETWORK

VPPRN: 10 YEARS OF RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

The VPPRN is the research arm of the VF and brings together patients with vasculitis, caregivers, researchers, data specialists, and healthcare providers to share knowledge and learn from one another every day.

The core mission of the VPPRN is to improve the health of people living with vasculitis by advancing early diagnosis, developing more effective treatments, and ultimately finding cures.

VPPRN researchers study all aspects of vasculitis — from diagnosis and quality of life to clinical trials and population-wide research — advancing science and deepening understanding of the disease.

Please visit our website to learn more about the VPPRN: vasculitisfoundation.org/research-discoveries



“The VF is a wonderful organization that I’m quite proud to be both part of and to support with my time and donations. The VF is an incredible supporter of research around the world, by both directly sponsoring research and encouraging patients to become aware of research they may want to participate in. Many of the themes are about improving treatment for patients with vasculitis.”

—Peter Merkel, MD, MPH

Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology, Chief of the Division of Rheumatology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Principal Investigator of the VCRC and Co-Principal Investigator of the VPPRN

“The VPPRN is built on the premise that patients are partners and true equals, collaborating together with clinical researchers to support the research network. We provide the patient’s voice and perspective to research studies, which answer questions that are important to clinicians, and that are important to vasculitis patients and their families.”

—Jenn Gordon, PhD

Biomedical Researcher, Co-Principal Investigator of the VPPRN, EGPA Patient





VASCULITIS PATIENT-POWERED RESEARCH NETWORK

VPPRN Points of Pride



5,500+
Patients from
100+
Countries



8 Ongoing
Projects
*with 6 more set to
launch in 2026*



34
Projects
Completed



100+
Investigators



28
Publications



60+ Patient
Research
Partners/
Patient
Champions



VASCULITIS PATIENT-POWERED RESEARCH NETWORK

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN VASCULITIS



Megan E.B. Clowse
MD, MPH

*Professor of Medicine and
Chief of the Division of
Rheumatology & Immunology
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina*

In 2010, the VF awarded **Dr. Megan Clowse** a one-year grant to study pregnancy experiences in patients with vasculitis — one of the first and largest efforts of its kind. The findings revealed reproductive health as a critical, overlooked need and launched a new area of research.

Building on this work, Dr. Clowse partnered with Dr. Merkel, the VPPRN, and the VF to establish the Vasculitis Pregnancy Registry (VPREG) in 2016. The registry connects vasculitis experts and reproductive rheumatologists worldwide, expanding collaboration and improving clinical guidance.

This research has changed care: clinicians now more routinely discuss pregnancy planning and confidently prescribe pregnancy-compatible treatments.

VPREG now includes 200+ participants, has produced two Journal of Rheumatology publications, and continues to expand under **Dr. Catherine Sims** to study mental and emotional health during pregnancy.



Catherine A. Sims
MD, MHS

*Assistant Professor of Medicine,
Division of Rheumatology
& Immunology
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina*

“I continue to be inspired each day by my patients and to look for better ways to improve the health of both mother and baby.”

—Megan E.B. Clowse, MD, MPH



VASCULITIS PATIENT-POWERED RESEARCH NETWORK

HELPING CHILDREN WITH VASCULITIS



Jessica Bloom
MD, MSCS

VF YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD
2024–26

VCRC-VF FELLOW
2021–23

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics
University of Colorado-Denver

Attending Physician,
Pediatric Rheumatology
Children's Hospital Colorado

As the first pediatric rheumatologist to receive a VCRC–VF Fellowship, **Dr. Bloom** studied how vasculitis affects children at key developmental stages. Using VCRC and VPPRN data, she examined how age at onset influences disease features, treatment, outcomes, and patient-reported priorities, and established a dedicated pediatric vasculitis clinic at the University of Colorado – helping close gaps in pediatric care.

Building on this work, Dr. Bloom launched the Pediatric Vasculitis Registry (PedsVPPRN) in 2025, an international online platform where children and families share experiences through questionnaires to advance research on quality of life, access to care, school participation, and treatment effects.

“Through this fellowship and young investigator award, I gained the expertise necessary to decrease ambiguities in pediatric vasculitis care through clinical outcomes research,” Dr. Bloom stated. *“I am advancing the mission of the VF by increasing the presence of pediatrics within vasculitis research nationally.”*



A LEGACY OF HOPE: LOOKING FORWARD TOGETHER

For 25 years, the VF has advanced the future of vasculitis care. What began with a single research grant in 2002 has grown into V-BOLD – a global program transforming how vasculitis is understood, diagnosed, and treated.

Through your generosity, V-BOLD drives progress across three pillars: VF Research, the VCRC-VF Fellowship Program, and the Vasculitis Patient-Powered Research Network (VPPRN).

Together, they have transformed care from steroid-heavy treatments to targeted therapies, from isolated providers to a global network, and from unanswered questions to life-changing discoveries.

Every milestone reflects your impact – each fellowship, breakthrough, center of care, and patient who found expert support. This is your legacy.

Looking ahead, as traditional research funding becomes more limited, V-BOLD remains a vital lifeline for future researchers and specialists. Sustaining this momentum – and the next generation of advances – depends on your continued support.

With deepest gratitude for your partnership,

Joyce A. Kullman, Executive Director



**Learn More
About the
VPPRN**



**VASCULITIS
FOUNDATION®**

Our Mission

Building upon the collective strength of the vasculitis community, the Foundation supports, inspires and empowers individuals with vasculitis and their families through a wide range of education, research, clinical, and awareness initiatives.



**Invest in
Our V-Bold
Programs**