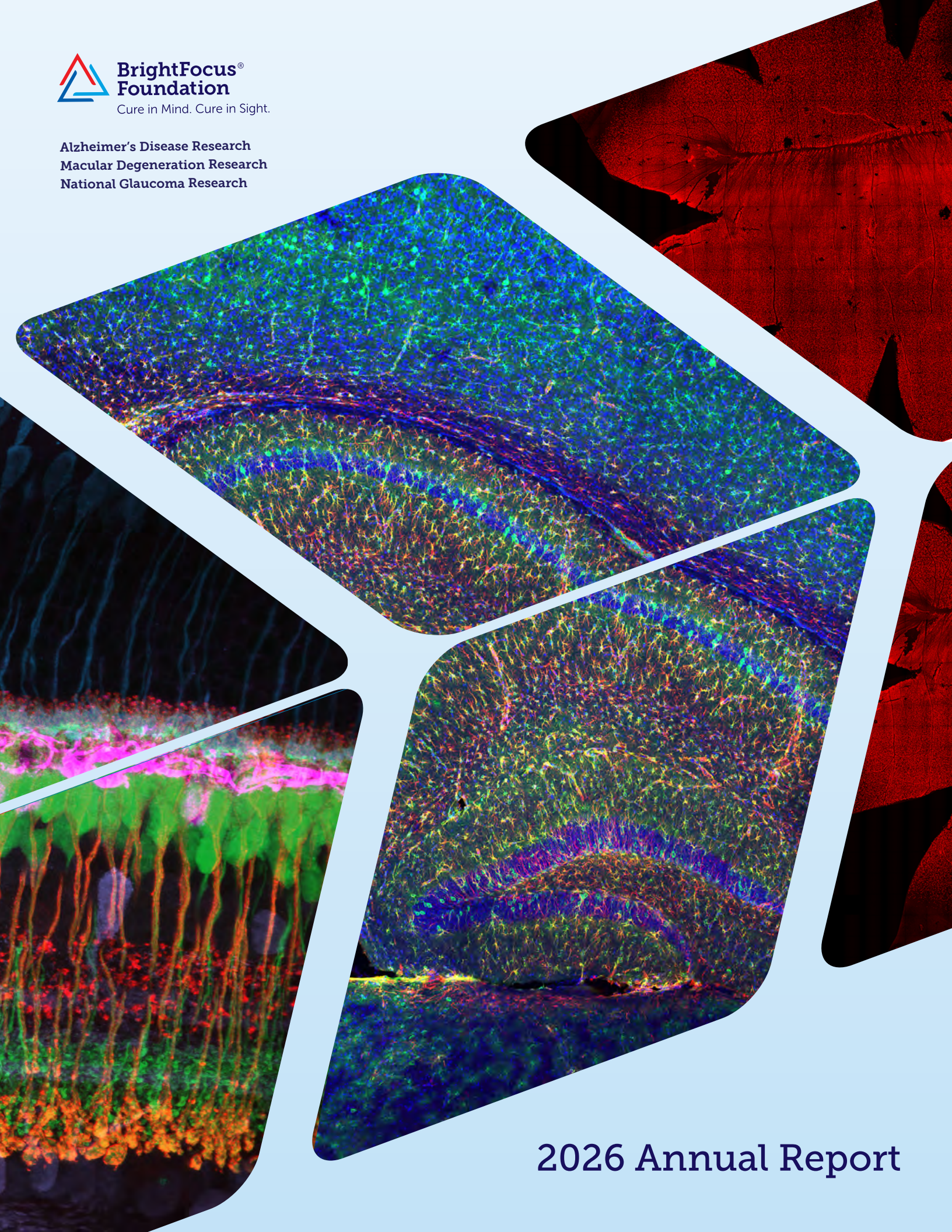
BrightFocus® Foundation
Cure in Mind. Cure in Sight.

Alzheimer's Disease Research
Macular Degeneration Research
National Glaucoma Research



2026 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

For millions of families facing Alzheimer's disease, macular degeneration, and glaucoma, breakthroughs can't come soon enough. Thanks to your partnership, BrightFocus Foundation is helping turn promising ideas into discoveries for a better future.

With your support, we continue to invest in bold ideas and the researchers behind them. This year alone, we awarded more than **$16 million in new research grants** to scientists across the globe. Through our grants, fellowships, mentoring, and Fast Track workshops, we are helping scientists pursue promising research, build connections, and advance breakthroughs.

We are also expanding our impact beyond the lab, reaching millions of people with our expert-led information programs. Behind that number is a growing community seeking trusted, evidence-based information to better understand the latest research and protect their brain and eye health. We are building on this momentum with new programs designed to reach healthcare providers and broader audiences.

While uncertainty in federal research funding is creating new obstacles, private philanthropy is more important than ever. Many of the early-stage ideas we fund would not otherwise receive philanthropic support, yet they hold tremendous potential to shape the future of the field. Your generosity helps ensure that innovative research can move forward.

Thank you for standing with us and with the scientists working to transform lives. Together, we are creating a brighter future for millions affected by diseases of mind and sight.

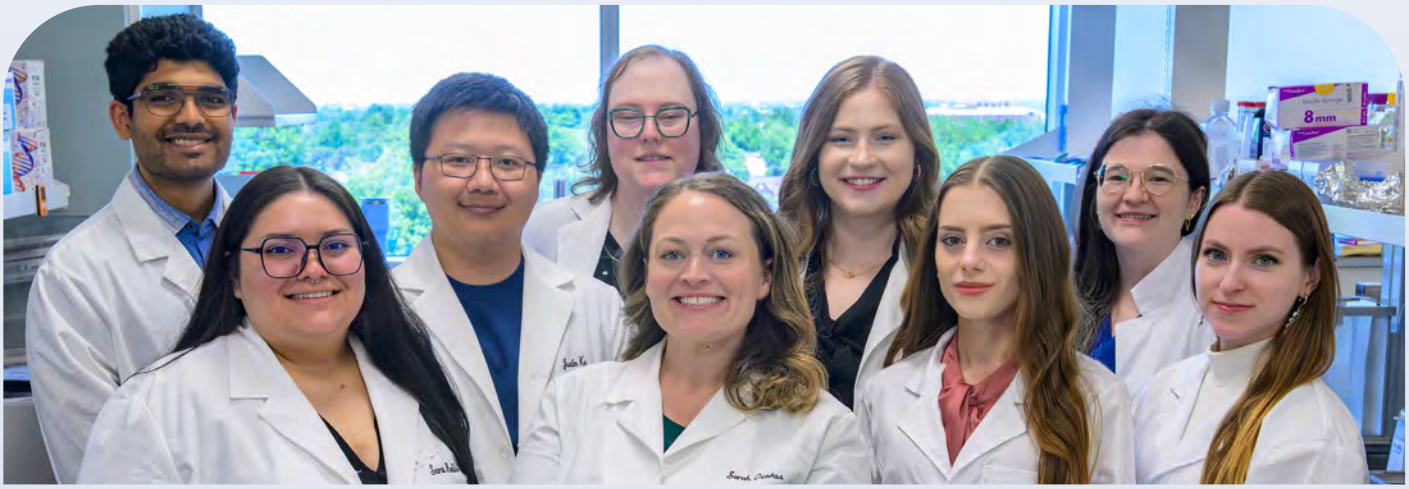
"Many of the early-stage ideas we fund would not otherwise receive philanthropic support, yet they hold tremendous potential to shape the future of the field. Your generosity helps ensure that innovative research can move forward."

With gratitude,

Stacy Pagos Haller
President and CEO

Patricia McGlothlin Stewart
Chair, Board of Directors

Survey Results Affirm the Immediate & Long-Term Impact of BrightFocus Funding



A comprehensive survey of BrightFocus grantees, fellows, Fast Track participants, and Scientific Review Committee members spanning more than 35 years highlighted the impact of our monetary and non-monetary contributions to accelerating innovation in our three disease programs.

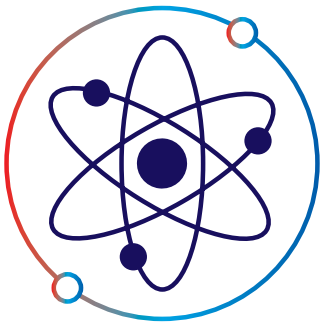
The findings highlight the strong return on investment of BrightFocus funding. Securing early-stage research funding from BrightFocus helps validate scientific researchers' work and unlocks follow-on funding awards that are, on average, **eight times the value of their initial BrightFocus award**.

BrightFocus funding helps keep research scientists in the lab, ensuring that the scientific community retains the expertise and knowledge. **94% of grantee and fellows reported that BrightFocus funding positively impacted their ability to continue their work**.

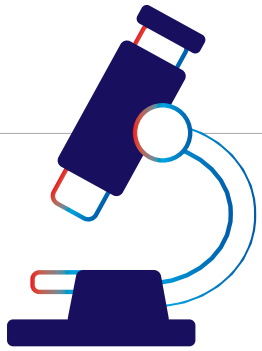
Contents

By The Numbers

182 Active research grants supported.



Actively funding research in **17** countries.



More than **$330M** in research grants awarded since inception.

228 Fellowships awarded in 2025-26 to enable scientists' participation in high-impact meetings and trainings.

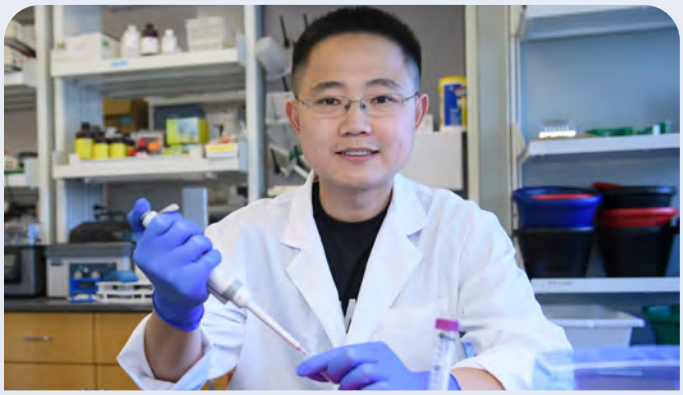
Mission

BrightFocus funds exceptional scientific research worldwide to defeat Alzheimer's disease, macular degeneration, and glaucoma and provides expert information on these heartbreaking diseases.

Vision

A world where all people age free from diseases of mind and sight.

What We Do



Fund the most promising research:
We provide initial funding to catalyze ideas with the greatest promise to change the trajectory of Alzheimer's disease, macular degeneration, and glaucoma.

Fuel the scientific pipeline:
Researchers we fund go on to receive government and industry grants that are, on average, 8 times larger than their original BrightFocus award, an 800% return on our initial investment.

Invest in scientists:
We foster mentorship and training opportunities for the next generation of brain and eye scientists.

Educate and empower:
Our expert resources and information programs share the latest research with those affected by these diseases.

Fueling Research Around the World

Age-related brain and vision diseases have no borders, and neither does our work. We're proud to be one of the only research funders with no citizenship requirements for scientists, fostering cross-border collaborations to unlock discoveries and deepen collective expertise.

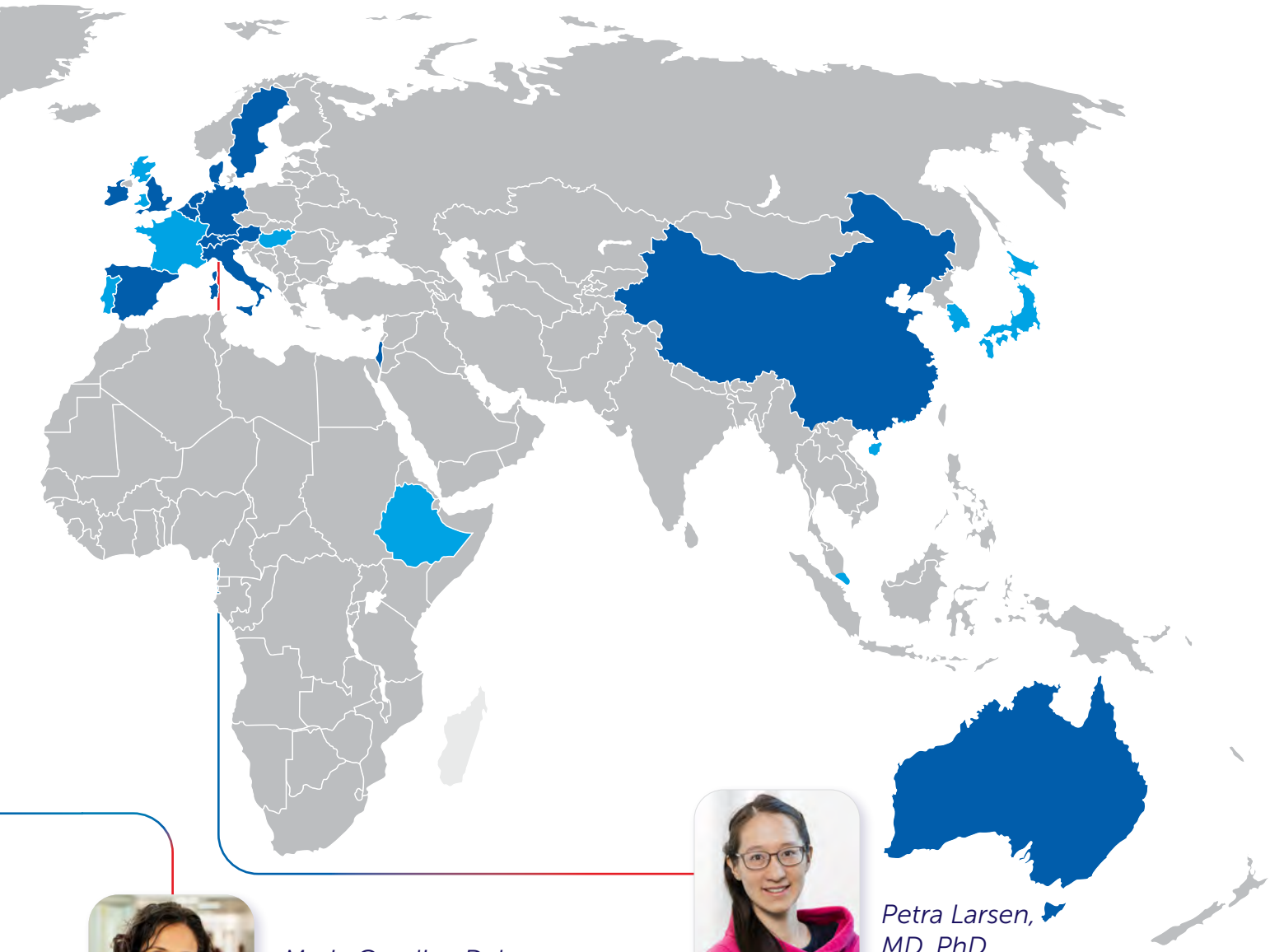
BrightFocus Research Grants by Country

- Active Grants
- Previously Funded Grants

Tyson Kim, MD, PhD

Novel Visualization of Aqueous Outflow: Uncovering Glaucoma Mechanisms and Therapeutic Targets

In San Francisco, researchers are using a first-of-its-kind noninvasive imaging platform to visualize and measure fluid drainage in the eye. By revealing the mechanisms that regulate eye pressure, the work may identify new therapeutic targets and pave the way for more personalized treatments to preserve vision and prevent blindness.



Maria Carolina Dalmasso, PhD

How Biology and Blood Markers Shape Alzheimer's Risk in Diverse Communities

In Argentina, researchers are studying both shared and population-specific biological markers across diverse and historically underrepresented populations. By integrating genetic, environmental, and blood protein data, the research will support the development of more accurate blood-based diagnostic tools and improve early detection of Alzheimer's disease for people worldwide.

Petra Larsen, MD, PhD

Linking Retinal Imaging and Molecular Changes in Age-Related Macular Degeneration

In Germany, researchers seek to improve understanding of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) by incorporating retinal imaging with genetic and blood-based molecular data to uncover the biological drivers of disease progression. The outcomes will strengthen earlier risk identification and more personalized strategies to preserve vision and improve quality of life for individuals affected by AMD.

Alzheimer's Disease Research

In 2025-26, Alzheimer's Disease Research supported:

108
research projects
—a $33 million investment.

Advancing Bold Ideas to Defeat Alzheimer's

Every 35 seconds, someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's disease. This irreversible degeneration of the brain has no known cause or cure and causes disruptions in memory, cognition, and personality.

With generous support from donors, Alzheimer's Disease Research invests in highly innovative, experimental projects and creative ideas with the most promise to foster a better understanding of disease onset, improve early detection and diagnosis, develop new treatments, and ultimately lead to a cure.

Explore some of the breakthroughs you helped make possible over the last year.

Jerome Mertens, PhD

Follow-On Award Advances Study of RNA Pollution Linked to Alzheimer's

BrightFocus Foundation's early investment in groundbreaking Alzheimer's research has helped propel a promising discovery into a new phase of development.

Alzheimer's Disease Research grantee **Jerome Mertens, PhD**, is part of a multi-institution California research team that has secured a $13 million, four-year award from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) to study how to identify and potentially eliminate a form of age-related cellular damage known as "RNA pollution," which is linked to neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. If successful, this could effectively reverse the brain's aging process.

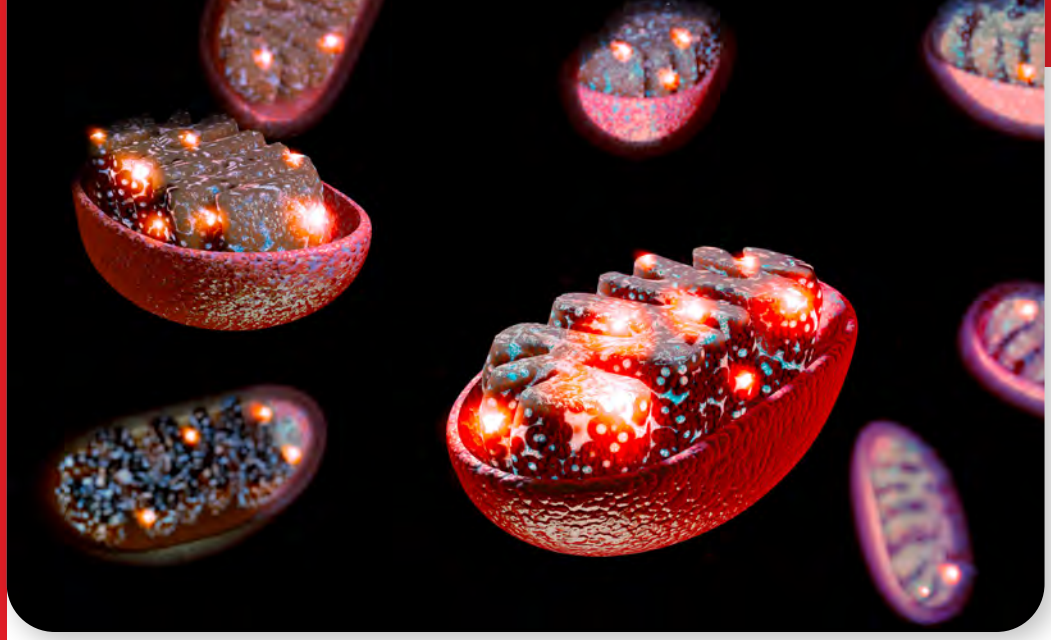
Dr. Mertens is an associate professor in the Department of Neuroscience at the University of California, San Diego. His lab is focused on what happens to cells in the brain during aging, particularly in the context of Alzheimer's disease.

With early support from Alzheimer's Disease Research. Dr. Mertens' lab developed a method of turning non-invasive patient-derived cell samples directly into neurons. Unlike other methods of cellular reprogramming, which "reset" the biological clock, these neurons maintain the same age as the people they came from, allowing the researchers to study RNA pollution within brain cells in a dish.

This follow-on grant, of which Dr. Mertens will receive $2 million, will allow for these cells, along with other patient samples, to be screened for RNA pollution signatures to better understand the difference between healthy neurons and those from people with neurodegenerative diseases.

> "The BrightFocus Alzheimer's Disease Research grant was the first project grant that was given to my lab, and for a new PI who had just started his own independent lab, [I] could start to explore and make new discoveries in directions that would not have been possible to approach without this support."

This large-scale project underscores the payoff that can happen when we invest in bold ideas early. The $13 million CIRM award represents a follow-on investment more than 16 times the amount of Dr. Mertens' initial Alzheimer's Disease Research awards.



A 3D rendering of mitochondria, the organelles responsible for producing the energy needed for the cell to grow and reproduce.

Shannon Macauley, PhD

Alzheimer's Disease Could Begin as a Fuel and Energy Problem

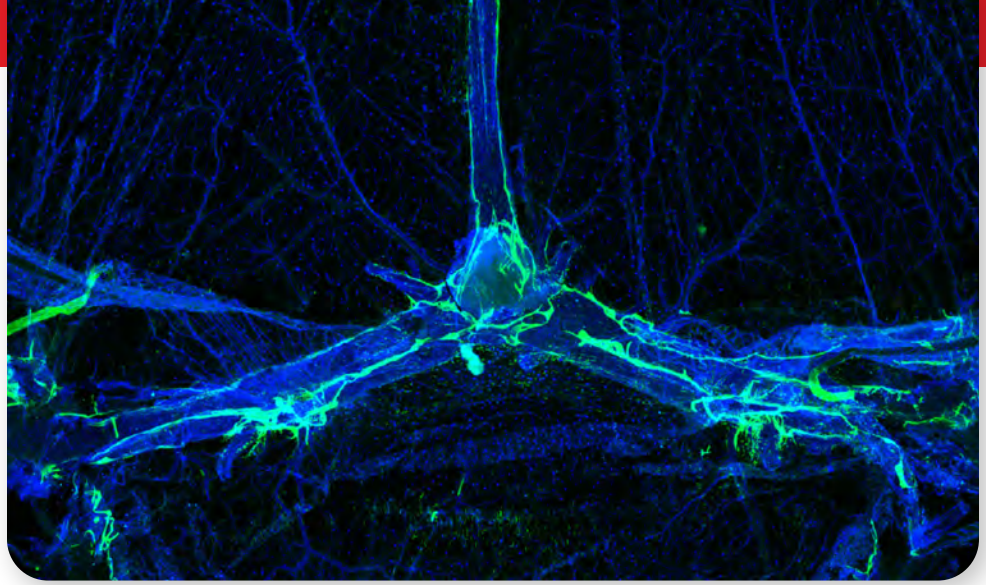
Many years before symptoms begin, malfunctions in how brain cells switch between sources of energy could help explain the root causes of Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's Disease Research-funded work from **Shannon Macauley, PhD**, associate professor at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, is connecting changes in brain metabolism to Alzheimer's effects on sleep, brain blood vessels, and inflammation.

This work supports an emerging view that, while brain cells can normally switch between sources of fuel as needs and availability changes, Alzheimer's causes this flexibility to be lost. When cells cannot use the right fuels, their mitochondria—the factories that turn fuel into energy—begin to malfunction, leading to cell damage and ultimately neurodegeneration.

Why does this happen? Dr. Macauley found that Alzheimer's causes the brain to activate an immune response that, while initially helpful, locks cells into a specific mode of fuel consumption that is not sustainable for long periods of time. That leads to still more inflammation and neuronal dysfunction.

Outside-the-box approaches are one of the calling cards of Alzheimer's Disease Research, and Dr. Macauley's project suggests that Alzheimer's goes well beyond the accumulation of misfolded proteins such as amyloid and tau that have long been known as hallmarks of the disease.



The brain's protective covering, called the meninges, is shown in blue. The drainage system in the brain—the lymphatic system—is highlighted in green. Dr. Da Mesquita's research has shown connections among the brain's drainage system, inflammation, and the sex-based differences in Alzheimer's.

Sandro Da Mesquita, PhD

What Explains the Sex Differences in *APOE4*-Linked Alzheimer's Risk?

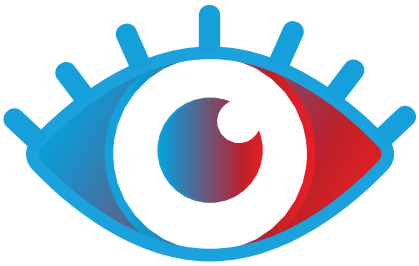
Alzheimer's disease is more common in women than men, and people who carry a gene variant called *APOE4* face a much higher risk of developing the disease. But why women with *APOE4* are more vulnerable has remained an open question among Alzheimer's researchers.

Sandro Da Mesquita, PhD—an Alzheimer's Disease Research grantee at Mayo Clinic Jacksonville—and his colleagues recently discovered that *APOE4* triggers very different immune responses in female and male brains. In females, it appears that carrying the *APOE4* gene causes the immune system to become overactive, driving inflammation and memory problems. In contrast, males with the same gene seem to receive a level of protection from their immune system against cognitive decline. Their findings were published in the journal *Neuron*.

> "This study highlights the need for personalized therapies when targeting *APOE*, brain immunity, and lymphatics to promote cognitive resilience in both females and males."

Suppressing the immune system as a possible treatment also showed divergent effects: *APOE4*-carrying females showed some measure of improvement, while males performed worse. This drives home the message that a "one-size-fits-all" strategy for Alzheimer's treatments may not be the right approach—in this instance, a therapy that holds promise in females may not work, or could even cause harm, in males.

Macular Degeneration Research



In 2025-26, Macular Degeneration Research supported:

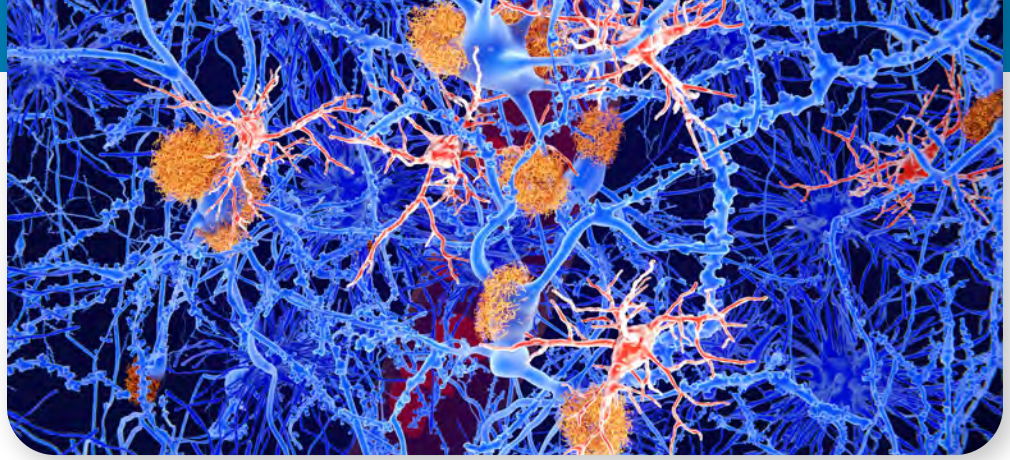
42
research projects
—a $14 million investment.

Protecting Sight Through Bold Science

Macular degeneration is a progressive eye disease that damages the macula, the part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. As a leading cause of vision loss among adults over 50, it affects nearly 20 million people in the United States, making everyday activities such as reading, driving, and recognizing faces increasingly difficult.

Thanks to your support, researchers are advancing innovative science to better understand the disease, develop better treatments, and protect sight for millions of people and families affected by macular degeneration.

Explore some of the breakthroughs you helped make possible.



Microglial cells (shown in orange) are the most prominent immune cells of the central nervous system.

Rinki Ratnapriya, PhD

Macular Degeneration Research Grantee Receives $3.2 Million Follow-On Grant to Study Genetic Links Between Neurodegenerative Diseases

Rinki Ratnapriya, PhD, an associate professor at Baylor College of Medicine and Macular Degeneration Research grantee, received $3.2 million in follow-on funding from the National Eye Institute (NEI) to support her research into the genetic changes that can lead to increased risk for retinal diseases including macular degeneration.

> "The support from BrightFocus Foundation at the beginning of my career has played a pivotal role in reaching this milestone, and I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude."

The immune system is increasingly viewed as a potential culprit in neurodegenerative diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and Alzheimer's. Improving our understanding of how the immune cells of the brain and central nervous system, particularly microglia, are involved could lead to new treatments.

With pivotal early support from Macular Degeneration Research, Dr. Ratnapriya discovered that microglia in the brain and eye share a genetic signature that could help explain the overlapping risk factors and features connecting AMD and Alzheimer's disease. This work suggests a common role for microglia in both diseases and could shed new light on how neurodegenerative diseases develop.

Macular Degeneration Research's investments in bold, innovative research like Dr. Ratnapriya's are crucial for providing early-career scientists the support they need to generate early data that they can leverage into longer-term, substantial funding. Dr. Ratnapriya's NEI grant represents a more than 7-fold return on the amount initially received from Macular Degeneration Research.

Krishna Singh, PhD

How Does Cigarette Smoke Increase Macular Degeneration Risk?

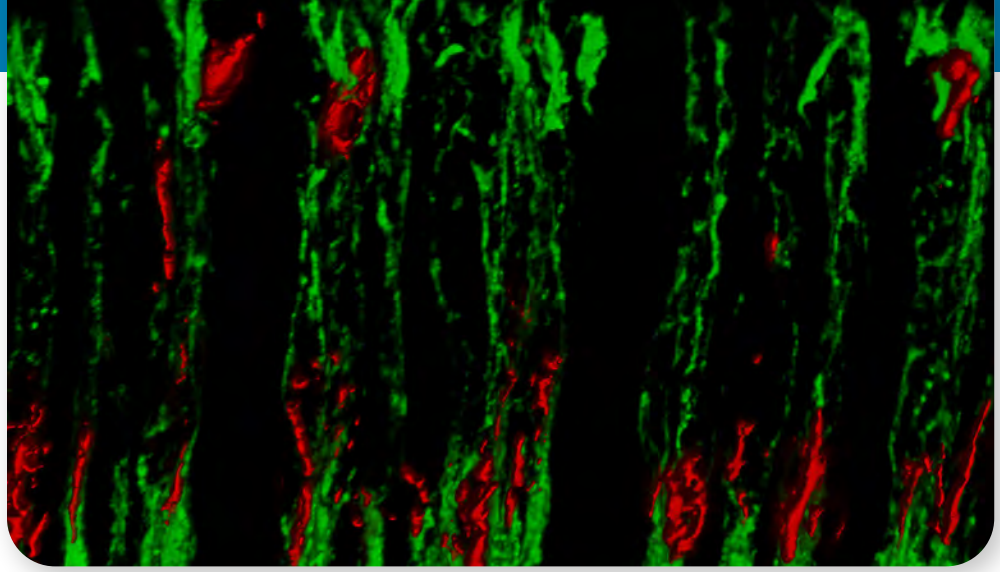
It's been long known that exposure to cigarette smoke increases the risk of developing several disorders, including age-related macular degeneration (AMD). In fact, smoking is recognized as the No. 1 modifiable risk factor for AMD. Despite this, it is still unclear exactly what exposure to cigarette smoke does in the eye to increase AMD risk. Answering this question could open the door for new treatment options.

This is exactly what **Krishna Singh, PhD**, a Macular Degeneration Research-funded postdoctoral researcher in Dr. James Handa's lab at Johns Hopkins University, is looking at. In a study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, Dr. Singh and colleagues found that smoking accelerates the aging process by affecting the epigenome—a complex group of changes to the DNA within individual cells that determines which genes are "turned on" and which are not.

When the researchers looked at the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE)—a layer of cells behind the retina that is damaged in AMD, they found that exposure to cigarette smoke turned on genes linked to hallmarks of aging and produced several changes in the epigenome that were accompanied by cellular degeneration.

These changes looked very similar to those seen in the retina of a smoker who had early AMD. By better understanding how cigarette smoke exposure starts a cascade that leads to RPE cell damage, protective and therapeutic strategies to treat AMD could be developed. These findings could also be applied to damage from secondhand smoke, wildfire smoke, and other external stimuli that produce noxious gas or particles.

> "Without the generosity of [Macular Degeneration Research] donors, much of this research wouldn't be feasible. To the donors, I extend my deepest gratitude. Your support is not just funding; it's an inspiration of hope for a brighter future. Thank you for trusting in postdocs and in the science to save lives."



The light-sensitive photoreceptors of the eye—the rod and cone cells shown here—could play a role in the progression of AMD.

Claudio Punzo, PhD

Study Suggests the Eye's Ability to Process Fats May Play a Key Role in Macular Degeneration

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) occurs when cells in the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE)—the eyes' "cleanup crew"—begin to break down. The RPE clears waste from nearby photoreceptors, the light-sensing cells of the retina. When this cleanup process goes awry, drusen, the clumps of fat and waste products that are a hallmark of AMD, can build up.

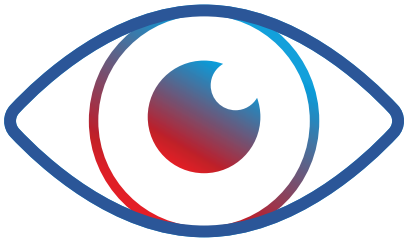
Findings from the lab of **Claudio Punzo, PhD**, a Macular Degeneration Research grantee and associate professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, suggest that the mismanagement of lipids (fats) within photoreceptors sets off a chain reaction that affects the ability of RPE cells to do their job, ultimately leading to the accumulation of debris and drusen formation. The research was published in the journal *Molecular Therapy - Nucleic Acids*.

Dr. Punzo also identified a key protein involved in controlling how photoreceptors manage lipids. When this protein is too active, the types of lipids produced by photoreceptors change, which affects the ability of RPE cells to process those lipids. When his team turned off that protein using an injectable form of gene-silencing therapy, the malfunctioning RPE processing and lipid processing in photoreceptors were both reversed, and drusen formation was slowed.

This reversal persisted for six months after a single treatment injection, suggesting a potential target for therapy in people with AMD. While more research is needed, this approach offers hope for slowing AMD before it advances to a more severe, vision-threatening stage.

> "The work opens the door for the treatment of inherited blinding disorders, including age-related macular degeneration."

National Glaucoma Research



In 2025-26, National Glaucoma Research supported:

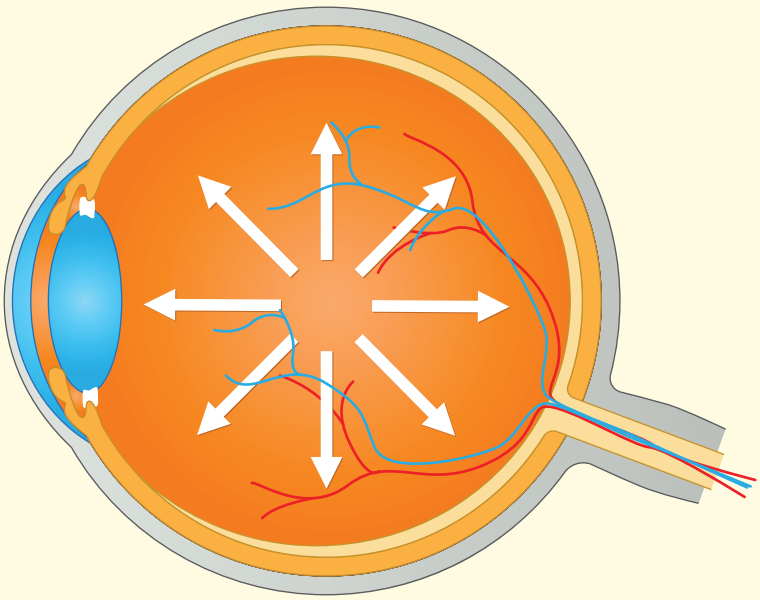
32
research projects
—a $5 million investment.

Driving Breakthroughs to Save Sight

Glaucoma affects more than 4 million Americans and remains one of the leading causes of blindness worldwide. Because glaucoma often causes no noticeable symptoms, as many as half of people with the disease may not know they have it until irreversible vision loss has occurred.

Through your generosity, National Glaucoma Research is fueling innovative science that is transforming our understanding of the disease and accelerating the search for better treatments and a cure.

Discover some of the advances your support helped make possible this year.



High intraocular (eye) pressure is the most significant risk factor for glaucoma.

Simon John, PhD

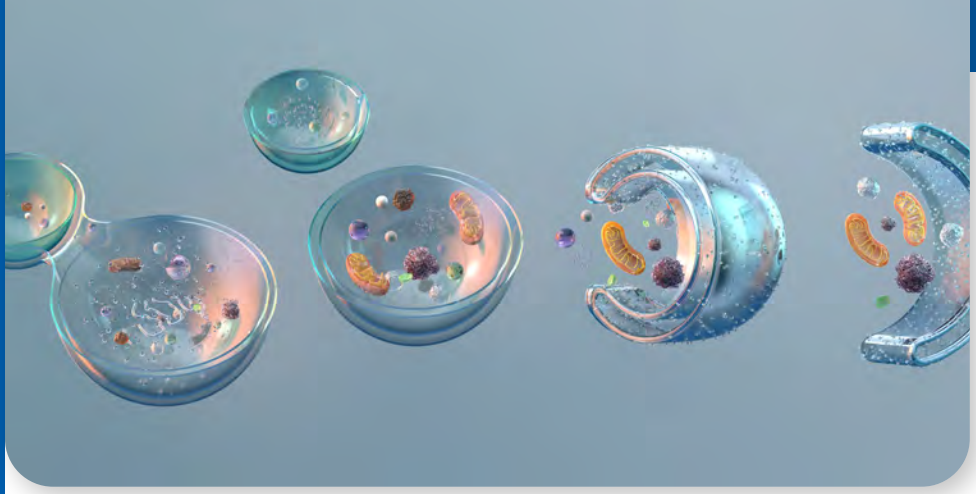
Taking a Closer Look at the Eye's Drainage System to Stop Glaucoma

Elevated intraocular pressure (IOP) is the most significant risk factor for glaucoma. IOP increases when fluid (aqueous humor) cannot drain properly from the eye. The trabecular meshwork (TM) is a tissue that plays a key role in regulating eye pressure, yet until recently scientists knew little about the cells that comprise it, how the TM regulates eye pressure, and what goes wrong in cases of glaucoma.

National Glaucoma Research grantee **Simon John, PhD**, at Columbia University and his lab aimed to change that by isolating and characterizing the genetic signatures of individual cells from the trabecular meshwork. They identified three distinct types of cells with unique jobs within the TM. Looking closer at these cell types, they found one in which dysfunction of the mitochondria—the energy factory of the cell—played a role in increasing eye pressure.

In mouse models with a specific genetic mutation that has also been found in people with an inherited form of glaucoma, treatment with vitamin B3, which protects mitochondria, decreased IOP. These results, published in the journal *eLife*, help shed light into the role certain cells play in the function of the TM and highlight the potential of mitochondrial-protecting therapeutics for people living with glaucoma.

> "Together, these data provide a wealth of new molecular information about TM cells and suggest a new approach for preventing IOP elevation."



Cells remove damaged structures and other unwanted debris by enclosing them inside bubble-like vesicles. These vesicles contain enzymes that digest and eliminate the debris.

Prabhavathi Maddineni, PhD

Helping Cells "Take Out the Garbage" Could Reduce Vision Loss in Glaucoma

Although intraocular pressure (IOP) is the primary modifiable risk factor for glaucoma, vision loss can persist in some people even once their IOP is brought back to normal levels. The question remains, why does damage continue to occur?

Prabhavathi Maddineni, PhD's postdoctoral fellowship project supported by National Glaucoma Research approached this question by looking at the downstream effects of increased IOP. Dr. Maddineni, now an assistant professor at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, specifically investigated the effects of high IOP on autophagy, the "garbage removal" process within cells. The study's results were published in *Molecular Neurodegeneration*.

Normally, when structures within cells become damaged, they are gathered up and destroyed by the cell. Dr. Maddineni and her team found that high IOP disrupted this process,, leading to a buildup of dysfunctional mitochondria—structures responsible for generating energy within cells.

Retinal ganglion cells (RGCs), the specialized neurons in the retina that transmit visual data to the brain, are particularly energy-hungry, and they rely on their mitochondria to function at peak levels to do their jobs. When damaged mitochondria are not removed properly, this not only decreases the energy available to RGCs, but these dysfunctional mitochondria, much like a damaged power plant, send damaging molecules into the environment that damages RGCs further.

By enhancing autophagy pharmacologically in the lab, Dr. Maddineni was able to reduce RGC degeneration, suggesting a potential new target for treating glaucoma.

> "Enhancing autophagy in RGCs represents a promising therapeutic strategy to prevent [glacuoma-related] neurodegeneration."

Marco Feligioni, PhD

Preventing Retinal Cell Death with Eye Drops

Glaucoma leads to vision loss due to the degeneration and death of retinal ganglion cells (RGCs). One reason this happens is somewhat counterintuitive: a signaling molecule, glutamate, which plays a critical role in how nerve cells communicate with each other, builds up to excessive levels. These levels become toxic and start a feedback loop referred to as "nPING" (non-canonical presynaptic-induced glutamate spillover) that empties even more glutamate into the tissue, which leads to RGC death.

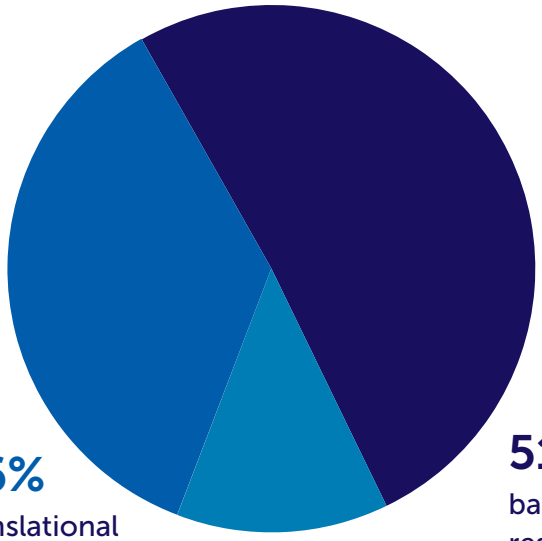
> "Our work provides two foundational advances: first, it establishes the nPING pathway as a critical driver of retinal degeneration and a druggable target; second, it introduces a novel first-in-class therapeutic modality that offers a direct and clinically viable path to neuroprotection."

Because glutamate is important for many normal processes in the eye and brain, stopping this cascade is not simply a matter of applying a drug to stop glutamate's ability to signal. National Glaucoma Research-funded scientist **Marco Feligioni, PhD**, at the European Brain Research Institute in Italy and co-principal investigator **Rebecca Sappington, PhD**, are instead testing a special inhibitor that only blocks cells' response to excessive glutamate. Their findings were published in the scientific journal *Cell Death & Disease*.

When tested in two models of retinal degeneration, this inhibitor protected cells throughout the retina, including RGCs, from cell death. It also did not affect the retina's normal processes and only blocked the specific mechanisms involved in the cells' response to too much glutamate.

Notably, the drug was administered through topical eye drops, which means that it was able to reach the retina and show protective effects without the need for injections. This represents a potential new noninvasive therapeutic approach to directly protect retinal cells in people with glaucoma.

BrightFocus 2026 Grants at a Glance



36% translational research grants

51% basic research grants

13% clinical research grants

Basic

Research that aims to better understand how a disease occurs and to obtain new ideas of how to stop the disease.

Clinical

Research involving volunteer participants to test the safety and effectiveness of drugs, devices, or other treatment candidates.

Translational

Research to move findings from the lab to the bedside by testing potential treatments.

Explore the Research

Alzheimer's Disease Research

Defining Immunometabolic Contributions to Cognitive Impairment in Alzheimer's Disease
Caleb Bailey, PhD
University of Kentucky Research Foundation

Visualizing How Alzheimer's Mutations Alter Protein Localization in Human Brain Cells
Shamchal Bakavayev, PhD
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Probing the Novel Roles of Neuromodulators in Alzheimer's Disease
Fikri Birey, PhD
Emory University

Uncovering Mechanisms of Myelin-Axon Pathology in Alzheimer's Disease
Yifei Cai, PhD
Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China)

How Aging and Alzheimer's Affect the Brain's Blood Flow
James Cole, PhD
University College London (U.K.)
Co-Principal Investigator: Henk-Jan Mutsaerts, MD, PhD

Next-Generation Probiotics for Alzheimer's Disease
Laura Cox, PhD
Brigham and Women's Hospital

How Biology and Blood Markers Shape Alzheimer's Risk in Diverse Communities
María Carolina Dalmasso, PhD
Neurosciences and Complex Systems Unit (Argentina)

How Disrupted Body Clocks Worsen Brain Cell Damage in Alzheimer's Disease
Paula Desplats, PhD
The Ohio State University

Early Protein Drivers of Alzheimer's Disease
Eleanor Drummond, PhD
University of Sydney (Australia)

How Social Conditions and Lifestyle Influence Dementia Biomarkers in Latin America
Claudia Duran-Aniotz, PhD
Adolfo Ibáñez University (Chile)
Co-Principal Investigators: Agustín Ibáñez, PhD; Hernando Santamaria-Garcia, MD, PhD; Nilton Custodio, PhD; Andrea Slachevsky, MD, PhD; Martin Alejandro Bruno, PhD

Mapping How Cell Compartments Handle Fats in Alzheimer's Disease
Hugo Fernandes, PhD
University of Oxford (U.K.)
Co-Principal Investigators: Jonathon Nixon-Abell, PhD & Albert Koulman, PhD

Targeting Proinflammatory Molecules Using a Chimeric Receptor to Reduce Inflammation and Tauopathy
Gilbert Gallardo, PhD
Washington University in St. Louis

A New Role for Amyloid Precursor Protein as a Mechanical Linker in Neurons
Ben Goult, PhD
University of Liverpool (U.K.)
Co-Principal Investigator: Devrim Kilinc, PhD

Long-Term Changes in Blood Biomarkers Associated with Brain White Matter Injury
Cellas Hayes, PhD
University of Kentucky Research Foundation

"Cognition in a Dish" to Develop New Alzheimer's Therapies
Matthias Hebisch, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital (Mass General)

Astrocytic NLRX1 Contributes to Multiple Aspects of Alzheimer's Disease
Martin Hsu, PhD
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Dorsal Raphe Nucleus: Seam for Earliest Detection of Tau and Symptoms
Heidi Jacobs, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital (Mass General)

Axons, Synapses, and Myelin: Where Does Alzheimer's Strike First?
Selene Lomoio, PhD
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Co-Principal Investigator: Valentina Fossati, PhD

Understanding the Link Between Alzheimer's Disease Risk Genes and Immune Responses in the Brain
Amanda McQuade, PhD
University of California, San Francisco

How Ovarian Immune Cells May Shape Alzheimer's Risk
Sarah Ocañas, PhD
Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation
Co-Principal Investigator: Jeffrey Mason, PhD

Identifying the Molecular Connections Between Cardiometabolic Problems and Alzheimer's Disease
Daniel Panyard, PhD
Stanford University

Does Fructose Contribute to Neurodegeneration and Alzheimer's Disease Development?
Justin Perry, PhD
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Developing a Noninvasive Gene Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease
Dominika Pilat, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital (Mass General)

Using Protein Signatures to Uncover Alzheimer's Disease Subtypes and Predict Disease Progression
Saima Rathore, PhD
Emory University
Co-Principal Investigators: Nicholas Seyfried, PhD & Allan I. Levey, MD, PhD

Investigating the Role of Genetic Ancestry and Mitochondrial Dysfunction in Alzheimer's Disease
Austin Reynolds, PhD
University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth
Co-Principal Investigators: Nicole Phillips, PhD & Robert Clinton Barber, PhD

Small Vessel Disease Biomarkers to Improve Understanding of Vascular and Alzheimer's Dementia
Leonardo Rivera-Rivera, PhD
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Tracking Early Alzheimer's Disease Over Time Through Spatial Navigation
Vladislava Segen, PhD
German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (Germany)

Why Alzheimer's Disease Targets Some Cells First: A Clue in the Anterior Hypothalamus
Gowoon Son, PhD
Mayo Clinic Jacksonville

Mapping Brain Resilience in the Oldest-Old: A Multi-Omic Atlas of Cognitive Protection
Vivek Swarup, PhD
University of California, Irvine

Predicting Therapeutic Interventions for Resilience to Brain Aging
Christina Theodoris, MD, PhD
Gladstone Institutes

Quantifying Cerebrospinal Fluid Flow Dynamics in Alzheimer's Disease Using 4D Flow MRI
Tomas Vikner, PhD
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Investigating Autoimmune Contributions to Alzheimer's Disease
Jennifer Yokoyama, PhD
University of California, San Francisco
Co-Principal Investigator: Joseph J. Sabatino, MD, PhD

Visual System Vulnerability in Dementia: From Detection to Determinants
Keir Yong, PhD
University College London (U.K.)
Co-Principal Investigators: Andre Altmann, PhD & David M. Cash, PhD

Clusterin Glycosylation for Early Detection of Alzheimer's Disease
Qi Zhang, PhD
Emory University

Exploring How Signals from the Body Influence Alzheimer's Disease
Haoyue Zhou, PhD
Gladstone Institutes

Macular Degeneration Research

Preserving Cone Photoreceptors in Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Ryoji Amamoto, PhD
Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary (Harvard)
This grant is made possible by the support of the Parr family.

Development of an Oral Treatment for Dry AMD Using Everyday Anti-Inflammatory Drugs
Marco Bassetto, PharmD, PhD
University of California, Irvine

Developing a New Treatment for Wet AMD: Targeted Removal of a Disease-Causing Protein
Celia Bisbach, PhD
University of Wisconsin-Madison
This grant is made possible by the support of Ms. Peterson.

Sterically Hindered Phenol, PMC, as a Potential Novel Therapeutic for Geographic Atrophy
Suman Chaudhary, PhD
Schepens Eye Research Institute (Harvard)
This grant is made possible by the support of the Free Family Foundation.

Studying Blood Flow During Exercise to Understanding the Origins of AMD
Mark Draelos, MD, PhD
University of Michigan

Role of Lack of Sleep in the Development of Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Anaïs Françon, PhD
Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Canada)

Linking Retinal Imaging and Molecular Changes in Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Petra Larsen, MD, PhD
German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (Germany)

Protecting Eye Blood Vessels to Slow Vision Loss in Macular Degeneration
Eric (Xiang) Ma, PhD
Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation

RPE Lipid Degradation and Secretion in Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Jason Miller, MD, PhD
University of Michigan
This grant is made possible by the support of the Parr family.

How Retinal Cells Drive Inflammation in Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Sarah Palko, PhD
Trinity College Dublin (Ireland)

Uncovering the Hidden Link Between Liver Health and Macular Degeneration
Sunghee Park, PhD
Purdue University

Human Retina-on-a-Chip: A Next-Generation Model for Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Amir Vahabikashi, PhD
Northeastern University
This grant is made possible by the support of the Ivan Bowen Family Foundation.

Advancing AMD Diagnosis with Novel Spectroscopic Tools
David Veysset, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital (Mass General)

Restoration of Crucial Retinal Lipids to Prevent Vision Loss in Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Lily (Wenjing) Wu, PhD
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

National Glaucoma Research

Foot-Based Monitoring and Feedback to Improve Mobility and Reduce Falls in Glaucoma
Navid Amini, PhD
California State University, Los Angeles

Maldevelopment of Schlemm's Canal in Children with Glaucoma
Revathi Balasubramanian, PhD
Columbia University

Understanding Optic Nerve Head Astrocyte Contributions to Glaucoma
Evan Cameron, PhD
Cleveland Clinic – Lerner Research Institute

Improving Glaucoma Care with Agentic Artificial Intelligence
Mark Christopher, PhD
University of California, San Diego

Exploring Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonists for the Treatment of Glaucoma
Qi Cui, MD, PhD
University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine

Using Artificial Intelligence to Detect Loss of Connections Between Neural Cells in Glaucoma
Luca Della Santina, PhD, PharmD
University of Houston

Measuring the Effects of Visual Stimuli on Retinal Blood Vessels and Flow
Stuart Gardiner, PhD
Good Samaritan Foundation (Legacy Health)

Reducing Inflammation to Protect Vision in Glaucoma
Cátia Gomes, PhD
Indiana University

Novel Visualization of Aqueous Outflow: Uncovering Glaucoma Mechanisms and Therapeutic Targets
Tyson Kim, MD, PhD
University of California, San Francisco

Using Nature's Hibernation Strategies to Protect Vision in Glaucoma
Kiyoharu Miyagishima, PhD
National Eye Institute, NIH
Co-Principal Investigator: Francisco Manuel Nadal-Nicolas, PhD

How Neural Activity Shapes Vision Recovery in Glaucoma
Yvonne Ou, MD
University of California, San Francisco

Activating the Eye's Own Nitric Oxide to Fight Glaucoma
Myoungsup Sim, PhD
Duke University

Spatial Responses to Elevated Pressure in the Human Optic Nerve Head
Jeremy Sivak, PhD
University Health Network (Canada)

Investigating the Role of Impaired Mitochondrial Dynamics in Exfolation Glaucoma
Arunkumar Venkatesan, PhD
SUNY Upstate Medical University
Co-Principal Investigator: Audrey M. Bernstein, PhD

The Immune Landscape of the Human Optic Nerve Head
Monica Vetter, PhD
University of Utah
Co-Principal Investigator: Navita Lopez, PhD

Using Artificial Intelligence to Discover Genetic Risk Factors for Glaucoma Worsening
Nazlee Zebardast, MD, PhD
Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary
Co-Principal Investigator: Mohammad Eslami, PhD

Special Thanks to Donors Supporting Ongoing Grants

Alzheimer's Disease Research

Monitoring Neural Activity and Neuroinflammation in Alzheimer's Disease
Feng Tian, PhD
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
This grant is made possible by the support of the Luminescence Foundation.

Macular Degeneration Research

Electronic Implants for Restoring Sharp Vision in Macular Degeneration
Mohajeet Bhuckory, PhD
Stanford University School of Medicine
This grant is made possible by the support of Karl and Yoriko McGillvray.

Shaping of Neuronal Connections by Resident Immune Cells
Ashley Farre, PhD
University of Idaho
This grant is made possible by the support of Karl and Yoriko McGillvray.

How Metabolic Stress Can Drive Macular Degeneration
Valencia Fernandes, PhD
University of California, San Francisco
This grant is made possible by the support of Karl and Yoriko McGillvray.

How Aging of the Immune System Affects Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Masayuki Hata, MD, PhD
Kyoto University (Japan)
This grant is made possible by the support of Karl and Yoriko McGillvray.

The Generation of Cone Photoreceptor Outer Segments
Heike Kroeger, PhD
University of Georgia
This grant is made possible by the support of the Free Family Foundation.

Grants will be awarded pending contract negotiations.

World-Class Experts Drive Research Advancements

Composed of renowned leaders in their fields, our Scientific Review Committees recommend new research opportunities for BrightFocus to advance its goal of defeating Alzheimer's disease, macular degeneration, and glaucoma. The following experts have served on each committee within the last five years.

Alzheimer's Disease Research

CO-CHAIRS:

David M. Holtzman, MD, Washington University School of Medicine
Hui Zheng, PhD, Baylor College of Medicine

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Nicola Allen, PhD, Salk Institute
Beau Ances, MD, PhD, Washington University School of Medicine
Katrin Andreasson, PhD, Stanford University
David Attwell, FRS, University College London
Rhoda Au, PhD, Boston University School of Medicine
Dwight Bergles, PhD, Johns Hopkins University
David R. Borchelt, PhD, University of Florida
Guojun Bu, PhD, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Hong Kong)
Todd Cohen, PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Laura Cox, PhD, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital
Carlos Cruchaga, PhD, Washington University School of Medicine
Mark Ebbert, PhD, University of Kentucky
Steven Estus, PhD, University of Kentucky
Douglas Galasko, MD, University of California, San Diego
David Gate, PhD, Northwestern University
Charles G. Glabe, PhD, University of California, Irvine
Todd E. Golde, MD, PhD, Emory University
Nicola Hamilton-Whitaker, PhD, King's College London
John Hardy, PhD, FMedSci, FRS, University College London (U.K.)
Julie Harris, PhD, Allen Institute
S. Abid Hussaini, PhD, Nathan Kline Institute
Joanna Jankowsky, PhD, Washington University in St. Louis
Lance Johnson, PhD, University of Kentucky
Martin Kampmann, PhD, University of California, San Francisco
Aimee Kao, MD, PhD, University of California, San Francisco
Ksenia Kastanenka, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital
Daniel Lee, PhD, University of Kentucky
Cynthia A. Lemere, PhD, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital
Allan I. Levey, MD, PhD, Emory University
Yueming Li, PhD, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Brendan P. Lucey, MD, Washington University School of Medicine
Shannon Macauley, PhD, University of Kentucky
Edoardo Marcora, PhD, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Jessica Rexach, MD, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles
Matthew Rowan, PhD, Emory University
David P. Salmon, PhD, University of California, San Diego
Melanie Samuel, PhD, Baylor College of Medicine
Gerard Schellenberg, PhD, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
Aristeidis Sotiras, PhD, Washington University School of Medicine
Russell Swerdlow, MD, University of Kansas Medical Center
Malu Tansey, PhD, Indiana University
Julia TCW, PhD, Boston University
Gopal Thinakaran, PhD, University of South Florida
Robert Vassar, PhD, Northwestern University
Cheryl Wellington, PhD, University of British Columbia
Donna Wilcock, PhD, Indiana University School of Medicine
Benjamin Wolozin, MD, PhD, Boston University
Tony Wyss-Coray, PhD, Stanford Medicine
Riqiang Yan, PhD, University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Tracy Young-Pearse, PhD, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School
Xiongwei Zhu, PhD, Case Western Reserve University
Na Zhao, MD, PhD, Mayo Clinic Jacksonville

Macular Degeneration Research

CHAIR:

Michael B. Gorin, MD, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Bela Anand-Apte, PhD, Cleveland Clinic Foundation
John D. Ash, PhD, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Catherine Bowes Rickman, PhD, Duke University
Kristen Bowles-Johnson, OD, PhD, Indiana University
Milam Brantley Jr., MD, PhD, Vanderbilt University
Valeria Canto-Soler, PhD, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
Itay Chowers, MD, Hadassah Medical Center (Israel)
Karl Csaky, MD, PhD, Retina Foundation of the Southwest
Ana Chucair-Elliot, PhD, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Charles DeBoer, MD, PhD, Stanford University
Sarah Doyle, PhD, Trinity College (Ireland)
Mark Emerson, PhD, The City College of New York, CUNY
Steven J. Fliesler, PhD, University at Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
Joelle Hallak, PhD, University of Illinois
Daniel Hass, PhD, University of Washington
Yali Jia, PhD, Oregon Health & Science University
Sangeetha Kandoi, PhD, Johns Hopkins University
Aparna Lakkaraju, PhD, University of California, San Francisco
Theodore Leng, PhD, Stanford Medicine
Alfred S. Lewin, PhD, University of Florida
Abdel Majdoubi, PhD, Yale University
Goldis Malek, PhD, Duke University
Robert Mullins, PhD, University of Iowa
Martha Neuringer, PhD, Oregon Health & Science University
Patsy Nishina, PhD, The Jackson Laboratory
Neal Peachey, PhD, Cleveland Clinic
Nancy J. Philp, PhD, Thomas Jefferson University
Przemyslaw (Mike) Sapieha, PhD, University of Montreal (Canada)
Florian Sennlaub, MD, PhD, Institut De La Vision (France)
Lois Smith, MD, PhD, Boston Children's Hospital
Karl Wahlin, PhD, University of California, San Diego

National Glaucoma Research

CO-CHAIRS:

Adriana Di Polo, PhD, University of Montreal (Canada)
C. Ross Ethier, PhD, Emory Eye Center, Emory School of Medicine
John C. Morrison, MD, Oregon Health & Science University
Darrell WuDunn, MD, PhD, University of Florida College of Medicine

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dong Feng Chen, PhD, Harvard Medical School
Abbot F. Clark, PhD, University of North Texas
Crawford Downs, PhD, University of Alabama
Michael Fautsch, PhD, Mayo Clinic Rochester
Brad Fortune, OD, PhD, Devers Eye Institute
Kimberly Gokoffski, MD, University of Southern California
Michael Hauser, PhD, Duke University
Yi Hua, PhD, University of Mississippi
Denise Inman, PhD, University of North Texas
Tatjana Jakobs, MD, Harvard Medical School
Hari Jayaram, PhD, Moorfields Eye Hospital
Kate Keller, PhD, Oregon Health & Science University
Rachel Kuchtey, MD, PhD, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Richard Libby, PhD, University of Rochester
Paloma Liton, PhD, Duke University
Prabhavathi Maddineni, PhD, University of Missouri-Columbia
Milica Margeta, MD, PhD, Massachusetts Eye and Ear
Nicholas Marsh-Armstrong, PhD, University of California, Davis
Colleen McDowell, PhD, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Stuart J. McKinnon, MD, PhD, Duke University
Gillian McLellan, BVMS, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Jason Meyer, PhD, Indiana University
James Morgan, MA, DPhil, BM, BCH, FRCOphth, Cardiff University
Robert W. Nickells, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Yvonne Ou, MD, University of California, San Francisco
Gavin Roddy, MD, PhD, Mayo Clinic Rochester
Babak Naghizadeh Safa, PhD, University of South Florida
Rebecca Sappington, PhD, Wake Forest University
Ian Sigal, PhD, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Dorota Skowronska-Krawczyk, PhD, University of California, Irvine
W. Daniel Stamer, PhD, Duke University
James N. Ver Hoeve, PhD, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Benjamin Xu, MD, PhD, University of Southern California

New PSAs Urge Eye Exams to Help Save Sight

Watch the PSAs at **StopAMD.org** and **StopGlaucoma.org.**

BrightFocus launched a series of public service announcements in English and Spanish—**Stop AMD** and **Stop Glaucoma**—encouraging people to make annual comprehensive eye exams a priority. Because conditions like macular degeneration and glaucoma can progress silently, early detection through an eye exam is critical to saving vision. The campaign features real stories of people living with macular degeneration and glaucoma, inspiring others to prioritize their vision health.

Since debuting in August 2025, the campaign has aired more than 76,000 times in major markets across the U.S., extending its reach to millions. Print placements in *Scientific American*, *Forbes*, and *Sports Illustrated*, among others, have further amplified this important message, bringing life-changing information to broad and diverse audiences.

Expert Programs Bring Brain and Eye Health Information to Millions

Anker Berg-Sonne

In 2025-26, BrightFocus celebrated a milestone in delivering free, valuable health information to the public: surpassing **11 million lifetime views and listens** of our free public outreach and information programs around brain and eye health—*Zoom In on Dementia & Alzheimer's, Macular Chats*, and *Glaucoma Chats*.

These conversations with medical professionals and expert research scientists have touched countless lives, offering clarity and actionable guidance during what can feel like an overwhelming journey.

Hear from *Zoom In* participant **Anker Berg-Sonne** (pictured), a recently retired software developer who lives with his wife Kirsten outside of Boston.

"Finding [*Zoom In*] was a great experience and it has made it so much easier for me to understand what is going on the field. I have looked at a number of other sources of information, but finding your [program] was a big moment for me and helped me continually learn what's new. I feel really fortunate to be part of this. For many years there was no real progress in treating Alzheimer's; there's so much hope today."

Learn more and register for an upcoming program at **brightfocus.org/Programs**.

Expanding Dementia Education for Healthcare Providers

BrightFocus Foundation's Nancy Keach speaks with Dr. Scott Kaiser, a geriatrician and BrightFocus board member, about how healthcare providers can navigate conversations about cognitive impairment with their patients.

As Alzheimer's and dementia research continues to advance, primary care providers need practical, accessible educational resources to support early detection, treatment, and patient care. In partnership with the Gerontological Society of America, BrightFocus is expanding the reach of *Zoom In on Dementia & Alzheimer's*, delivering on-demand, expert-led guidance on emerging treatments, diagnosis, and care strategies to healthcare providers nationwide.

Covering topics such as newly approved therapies, genetics, risk reduction, and patient management, the program meets the growing demand for clear, actionable resources that help providers navigate the evolving landscape of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias—ultimately improving care for patients and their families.

Building Trust, Advancing Brain Health: Community Outreach Inspires 60 Memory Screening Sign-Ups

In partnership with The Clinical Research Center of New Jersey, BrightFocus hosted an adult basketball health event in Bergen County, New Jersey, focused on engaging African American men, who remain underrepresented in clinical trial research, in brain health awareness and clinical research. The event provided free health screenings, vaccinations, hearing checks, and liver assessments while fostering community dialogue about brain health and clinical trial participation. The event generated strong local support and valuable connections with community leaders. Most notably, approximately 60 individuals signed up for free memory screenings, demonstrating growing interest in proactive brain health and research participation.

Fast Track Workshops Advance the Next Generation of Vision and Brain Health Researchers

In 2025-26, BrightFocus Foundation convened its three Fast Track programs—**Alzheimer's, AMD, and Glaucoma Fast Track**—bringing together hundreds of early-career and established researchers from around the world for in-depth workshops. Through expert-led sessions on the latest research, hands-on learning, and mentorship opportunities, our Fast Tracks accelerate knowledge sharing and help equip the next generation of vision and brain health researchers with the tools and connections needed to advance discoveries in their fields.

Our Valued Partners

BrightFocus works closely with nonprofit and corporate partners on issues of common concern.

Action Against AMD
AARP
AgeWave
Alkeus
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Vision Research
Alzheimer's Los Angeles
American Glaucoma Society
anavex Life Sciences Corp.
antidote
AOPT
Apellis
ARVO
astellas
Atlantic Union Bank
axsome
Biogen
BIRAX
CANACN
CIHR IRSC
Cognito Therapeutics
Dementia Alliance of North Carolina
Dementia Friendly America
Drusolv Therapeutics
Eisai
FASEB
FNIH
Focused Ultrasound Foundation
Gates Ventures
Genentech
GILBERT FAMILY FOUNDATION
GLAUCOMA RESEARCH FOUNDATION
GLAUKOS
tgf
Helen Keller Foundation
HFC Hilarity for Charity
ISER International Society for Eye Research
ISMND
J.P.Morgan Private Bank
Keystone Symposia
Kyowa Kirin
LEAD
Lilly
medlive
MILKEN INSTITUTE
MOLECULAR NEURODEGENERATION
MTEC
National Academies Sciences Engineering Medicine
NEHEP
NIH National Eye Institute
NIH National Institute on Aging
NIH National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
PCH FILMS
PeerView Institute for Medical Education
RD Meeting
REGENERON
Reminiscent
Rendia
RESEARCH AMERICA
RKD GROUP
The RReSTORe Consortium
sanofi
UsAgainstAlzheimer's
Women's Health Access Matters

Global Alzheimer's Collaborations Foster Scientific Growth

BrightFocus has worked with partners across Western Europe to advance research and raise public awareness of Alzheimer's disease:

BELGIUM
Stichting Alzheimer Onderzoek

GERMANY
Alzheimer Forschung Initiative e.V.

FRANCE
Fondation Vaincre Alzheimer

THE NETHERLANDS
Alzheimer Nederland

Your Generosity Fuels Every Breakthrough

The support of individual donors, family foundations, and corporate partners makes our work possible. A wide range of contribution opportunities are available to accommodate resources and charitable goals. Each gift is vital to our mission of finding cures for these diseases of mind and sight.

Mountains of Gratitude: Supporting Macular Degeneration Research for Future Generations

Fred Jacobson

When **Fred Jacobson** was diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) in his mid 70s, he was still leading tours as a professional mountain guide despite having faced retinal tears and bilateral knee replacements. While those medical challenges hadn't rattled him much, AMD was different—Fred's mother had developed the disease around the same age. As he and his sister witnessed their mother slowly lose her sight, dementia also stole her memory, so that every day she learned anew that she could no longer see. "It was shattering," Fred recalled. "Through my mother's experience, I was set up to be terrified by the whole idea of macular degeneration."

Thanks to early detection during follow-up for his retinal repairs, and the use of anti-VEGF therapies, Fred's worst fears didn't materialize. He continued working until age 80, and today, at 88, continues to juggle multiple volunteer roles. "I've been treated for about 10 years with virtually no loss of vision," he said. "I was, and continue to be, so grateful."

When Fred learned about BrightFocus Foundation's Macular Degeneration Research program, he was driven to pay that gratitude with ongoing support. "My philosophy is to be grateful for what's good in your life and do what you can to make sure the next generation will have those advantages or more," he said. "The contributions of people like me 20 years ago led to what helped me so much, and is still helping me."

> "My philosophy is to be grateful for what's good in your life and do what you can to make sure the next generation will have those advantages or more. The contributions of people like me 20 years ago led to what helped me so much, and is still helping me."

BrightFocus Foundation's public information programs and resources also offer tremendous benefit, Fred said. "Not everybody has good doctors or even knows they should get regular eye exams. But BrightFocus makes information on how you can help protect your vision and eye health easily accessible to anyone. That's a pretty good thing to support."

More Than a Card Game: Supporting Alzheimer's Disease Research

In honor of Scott Miller's (center) father & father-in-law, this group of friends and family have donated over the past four years to help fight Alzheimer's.

Scott Miller first started hosting euchre card games in his Irondequoit, New York, collision shop after his father-in-law, Bob VanHove, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. "He was just a euchre fanatic, so we started playing with four guys once a month," Scott recalled. "The next thing you know, it was four tables every week. Even as the disease progressed, he would win as much as anybody. His doctors were amazed."

The Millers were already intimately acquainted with Alzheimer's. Scott's father had also been diagnosed, and his family cared for him at home until the last months of his life. After Bob's diagnosis, Scott, his wife, and their family provided that same kind of support to Bob and his wife, Iris.

When Bob passed away a few years ago, Scott approached his fellow euchre players with an idea. (The group includes Scott's daughter, some of his buddies, and a few of their grown kids. They now play twice a month.)

"I said, we all know somebody who's passed away from Alzheimer's. Let's set aside a portion of the pot every week, and we'll donate it to a cause."

The group takes advantage of matching gift challenges to double their impact.

April 2026 marked the team's fourth contribution to Bright-Focus Foundation's Alzheimer's Disease Research program.

> "Alzheimer's is a vicious disease, and any progress they can make in treatment and discovery is huge in my book. Bob inspired us to keep playing. Everyone looks forward to it—it's a great night, a great group of people, and a great cause."

Supporting Innovation and Impact in Glaucoma Research

June Kinoshita

June Kinoshita's decision to provide ongoing support to BrightFocus Foundation's National Glaucoma Research program was inspired by respect born out of deep experience as an advisor and leader in the medical nonprofit field.

"Right from the beginning, I was very impressed," June said of her introduction to BrightFocus in 2011. That's when June was invited to join the organization's board, where she ultimately served until 2020. "It was run by very knowledgeable people who had a vision of where they wanted to go and wanted to ensure the funds raised were invested in the best way possible," she said.

A former science editor and journalist who developed a fascination with neuroscience, June switched careers when she was approached to help develop unique programs focused on Alzheimer's disease. Along the way, she co-founded AlzForum, a nonprofit information and networking platform aimed at keeping Alzheimer's and dementia researchers abreast of developments in the field. This formidable resume attracted the attention of BrightFocus Foundation's Scientific Affairs team.

Early in her tenure as a board member, June decided to join the monthly gift sustainer program in support of National Glaucoma Research. Her own diagnosis with very mild glaucoma played a role in that choice, but not in the way one might expect. "I'm not motivated out of a sense of needing to cure myself, but it did raise my awareness of more severe forms of glaucoma and the urgency to do more for a condition that is underfunded," she explained.

Another key factor in June's decision? "Some of the studies being carried out were much bolder than most glaucoma research," she said. While many studies focus on reducing ocular pressure, for example, National Glaucoma Research "[funded] research aimed at trying to slow down the degeneration of the retinal ganglion cells," she said. (These cells form the optic nerve, the key structure threatened by glaucoma.)

June also admires the way BrightFocus fosters the development of early-career researchers across all three of its disease programs, most notably through its Fast Track workshops that provide training and mentorship to emerging researchers.

> "Basic researchers don't always know there's a whole art to coming up with a project that will attract grants and can be translated into the clinic. BrightFocus' Fast Track programs teach young scientists to do that, which is really impactful."

Members of the Board of Directors.

Board of Directors

Chair

Patricia McGlothlin Stewart
J.P. Morgan & Co., Inc., *retired*

Vice Chair

Scott A. Kaiser, MD
Determined Health

Secretary

Thomas Freddo, OD, PhD
Wilmer Eye Institute,
Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine

Treasurer

Herbert L. Drayton III
HI Mark Capital

Members

Cecilia Arradaza
Stanford Medicine

Paul Campbell
Moneta Health

Shawna Gottlieb
National Center on Institutions and Alternatives

Dana Griffin
Eldera.ai

Tonya M. Matthews, PhD
International African American Museum

Adam Myers, MD, MHCM, FACHE, CHCQM, CPHRM
Chief Clinical Executive

John Penn, PhD
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Ann Argabright Seclow
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Jan M. Stouffer, PhD
DuPont Company, *retired*

Dale Young
Summit Financial Group

Honorary Member

Stanley B. Prusiner, MD
University of California, San Francisco
Nobel Laureate

Emeritus Directors

Grace Frisone
June Kinoshita
Judith F. Lee
Henry J. Pownall, PhD
Nicholas W. Raymond
Brian K. Regan, PhD
Scott D. Rodgville, CPA
Eric Siemers, MD
Ethan Treese

Our Leadership Team

President & CEO

Stacy Pagos Haller

Vice President, Scientific Affairs

Diane Bovenkamp, PhD

Senior Vice President, Development

R. Brian Elderton, MEd

Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships

Nancy Lynn Keach

Senior Vice President, Finance & Administration

Jon Walsh

Financial Highlights

BrightFocus is a nonprofit organization designated under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions to BrightFocus and its programs are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. The Foundation is supported entirely by voluntary private contributions.

BrightFocus received in-kind donations to expand public health information outreach; these are included in Program Services expenses, which have allowed the organization to reach millions of people with information about risk factors, treatments, and caregiving.

BrightFocus Foundation and Subsidiaries

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

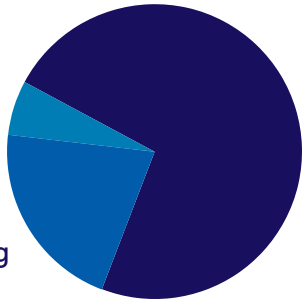
As of March 31, 2026 (in thousands of dollars)

Assets	
Cash and Investments	$59,823
Charitable Trusts, Bequests & Pledges Receivable	$7,296
Fixed Assets, Net	$3,545
Other Assets	$1,895
Total Assets	**$72,560**
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	$2,951
Grants Payable	$28,995
Charitable Gift Annuities	$498
Total Liabilities	**$32,404**
Net Assets	
Without Donor Restriction	$28,428
With Donor Restriction	$11,728
Total Net Assets	**$40,156**
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$72,560**

Consolidated Statement of Activities

For the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2026 (in thousands of dollars)

Support & Revenue	
Contributions and Grants	$43,618
Bequests	$18,340
Donated Services	$9,828
Gain on Sale of Rental Property	$5,586
Investment Income	$564
Rental & Other Income	**$77,936**
Total Support And Revenue	**$73,032**
Expenses	
Program Services	
Health Information Services	$31,967
Research	$22,218
Total Program Services	**$54,186**
Supporting Services	
Fundraising	$15,929
Management and General	$4,626
Total Supporting Services	**$20,555**
Total Expenses	**$74,740**
Change In Net Assets	**$3,196**



6% Management

21% Fundraising

73% Research & Health Information Services

*A complete copy of financial statements audited by CBIZ CPAs P.C. is available upon request from BrightFocus Foundation, 22512 Gateway Center Drive, Clarksburg, MD, 20871, or at **brightfocus.org**.*

Gowoon Son, PhD
2026 Alzheimer's Disease Research Grant Recipient

"I am deeply grateful to the donors, families, and BrightFocus Foundation whose **compassion and generosity support neurodegenerative disease research**.

Their support inspires and enables research aimed at **developing better diagnostics, more effective therapies, and ultimately a future with fewer lives impacted by neurodegenerative disease**."

Learn how you can make a difference toward a world free of diseases of mind and sight.

brightfocus.org/WaysToGive

BrightFocus® Foundation
Cure in Mind. Cure in Sight.

Alzheimer's Disease Research
Macular Degeneration Research
National Glaucoma Research

Connect

BrightFocus Foundation
22512 Gateway Center Drive
Clarksburg, MD 20871
1-800-437-2423
brightfocus.org

Integrity

BBB ACCREDITED CHARITY

Platinum Transparency 2026 Candid.

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR

MARYLAND NONPROFITS STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE