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## MCCRF Awards Grants to Three Colorectal Cancer Researchers

The Minnesota Colorectal Cancer Research Foundation has awarded research grants to three medical researchers at the University of Minnesota for 2023.

- Arjun Gupta, M.D., received the Sarah DeBord Memorial Grant  
Dr. Gupta will use his grant to study the time burdens of cancer care among people living with colorectal cancer. This award is given annually with support from the Colon Cancer Coalition.
- Matthew Dietz, received the Norm and Pat Wells Memorial Grant  
Mr. Dietz will be researching the impacts of various gut bacteria and its effects on colorectal cancer metastasis.
- Christopher J. LaRocca, M.D. received the Peter Wilhoit Memorial Grant  
Dr. LaRocca will be using his award to further his research on oncologic viruses as they relate to the treatment of colorectal cancer.

All three grants were awarded at the foundation's gala event, held at the Minnesota Depot on February 4, 2023. Colorectal Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death. In 2023 the American Cancer Society estimates that 34,380 people in Minnesota will be diagnosed with the disease and 10,280 will die from it. Rates of diagnosis and death are decreasing in people over the age of 50, but increasing at a rate of 1-2% per year in people under 50. MCCRF is an independent nonprofit foundation that funds colorectal cancer research in Minnesota. Since its inception in 2017, MCCRF has awarded more than \$1 million in colorectal cancer research grants to medical researchers at Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota.

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The **Minnesota Colorectal Cancer Research Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation which funds colon and rectal cancer research in Minnesota. The mission of the foundation is to build a community of colorectal cancer survivors, and their family and friends, who will work passionately to raise money to fund research that will improve the survival and quality of life of people with colon and rectal cancer. The Sarah DeBord Memorial Grant is given annually to promote research projects that support access to care.

The **Colon Cancer Coalition** is a **Program Partner** with the **Minnesota Colorectal Cancer Research Foundation** based in Minneapolis, Minn., is dedicated to encouraging screening and raising colon cancer awareness. Their signature Get Your Rear In Gear® and Tour de Tush® event series are volunteer-driven in communities throughout the United States. Each year they aim to grant more than \$1 million to local community programs that will raise screening rates, increase awareness, and educate the public about the signs and symptoms of this disease.

**Arjun Gupta, M.D.** is an Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of Minnesota. He is a gastrointestinal medical oncologist, a symptom management enthusiast, and a health services researcher. His research specifically examines cancer care access and delivery, the costs of cancer care, and the hidden burdens imposed on and faced by people with cancer and their caregivers while receiving this care.

**Matthew Dietz** is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota.

**Christopher J. LaRocca** is an assistant professor, Division of Surgical Oncology at the University of Minnesota. His main research interests are in gene therapy and oncolytic virotherapy. As a surgeon-scientist, he works to translate novel therapeutics to the clinic to bridge the gap between the lab and the patient.