

Tucson Researchers Awarded Lung Association Grants to Improve Health of Children with Asthma and Learn How a Natural Protein Protects Human Lungs



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Today, the [American Lung Association Research Institute](#) announced it awarded \$13.6 million in research grants to fund 129 innovative projects to advance today's science to end lung disease tomorrow, including two important projects in Arizona.

**For more
information
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Dr. Amanda Wilson from The University of Arizona was awarded the Catalyst Award to study how to improve health outcomes in children with asthma by reducing respiratory viral infections in schools. Dr. Stefano Guerra from The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center received the ACRC – Pilot Award to study the club cell secretory protein (CC16) which is mainly produced in the lungs and is responsible for protecting human airways airway from inflammation and infections.

Lung research is critical because 866,000 in Arizona are living with lung disease and each year, millions of people are impacted by respiratory viruses like COVID-19 and influenza. Through the Awards and Grants Program, the Lung Association supports trailblazing research, novel ideas and innovative approaches. The funded researchers investigate a wide range of lung health topics, including asthma, COPD, lung cancer, infectious lung diseases and more.

“We are honored to welcome Dr. Amanda Wilson and Dr. Stefano Guerra to the elite American Lung Association Research Institute and our efforts to fundamentally transform lung health here in Arizona and across the nation,” said Elizabeth Walton, Executive Director of the American Lung Association in Arizona. “Our research investment is key to unlocking solutions to alleviate the burden of lung disease. The Lung Association’s Awards and Grants Program promotes innovative research, collaboration, translation of discoveries and scientific exchange to transform today’s science into tomorrow’s solutions. Because when you can’t breathe, nothing else matters.”

Led by Dr. Wilson, The University of Arizona Board of Regents project aims to protect the health of young people with asthma by reducing respiratory viral infections in schools. Research for

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this project will focus on alleviating the harmful implications of asthma through the development of a risk calculator tool for school health personnel to limit virus transmission in classrooms.

“This project will involve the development of a risk calculator tool that school nurses can use to compare interventions for reducing the risk of respiratory viral infection for students, especially protecting those with asthma,” said Dr. Wilson. “I am immensely grateful for this opportunity to gain training in school health and to use my skill sets to provide decision-making support.”

Dr. Guerra’s research on behalf The University of Arizona Health Sciences will focus on analyzing the CC16 protein in depth, utilizing existing samples in hopes of providing insights into how the protein affects different demographics in relation to age.

“CC16 is a protein that is mainly produced in the lungs, where it exerts key anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory effects. Our hypothesis is that individuals who do not produce enough CC16 have an impaired growth of their lung function by young adult life and, in turn, are at increased risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) later in life,” said Dr. Guerra. “This American Lung Association - ACRC Pilot Grant will

be instrumental to test such hypothesis using the Lung Health Cohort, a unique population of young adults with available blood samples, lung function, and CT imaging.”

This year, awards were given in different categories addressing many aspects of lung disease; ALA/AAAAI Allergic Respiratory Diseases Award, ALA/ATS/CHEST Foundation Respiratory Health Equity Research Award, Catalyst Award, COVID-19 Respiratory Virus Research Award, Dalsemer Award, Innovation Award and Lung Cancer Discovery Award. Research projects funded by the

Lung Association are carefully selected through rigorous scientific peer review and awardees investigate a wide range of complex issues.

The [Lung Association's Research Institute](#) includes the Awards and Grants program, and also the [Airways Clinical Research Network](#), the nation's largest not-for-profit network of clinical research centers dedicated to asthma and COPD research. The Lung Association is currently accepting applications for its 2024-2025 research awards and grants cycle. For more information about the active research funding opportunities, visit [Lung.org/awards](https://lung.org/awards).

For more information about the new grant awardees and the entire American Lung Association Research Team, visit [Lung.org/research-team](https://lung.org/research-team).

Media Resources

- Media b-roll is available here: [Broll: ALA Research Team.mp4 | Powered by Box](#)
- American Lung Association logos and other media resources are available at [Lung.org/media](https://lung.org/media)

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About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, which has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and is a

Platinum-Level GuideStar Member, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: Lung.org. To support the work of the American Lung Association, find a local event at Lung.org/events.

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