

How an American Cancer Society Research Grantee Improves Breast Cancer Screening and Care

University of Michigan's Steven Katz, MD, expands access to genetic counseling and testing for breast cancer patients and their families.

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During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the [American Cancer Society](#) is proud to highlight the groundbreaking work of [Dr. Steven Katz](#), professor of health management and policy at the University of Michigan. Dr. Katz is a grantee of the American Cancer Society, whose research has focused on expanding access to genetic counseling and testing for breast cancer patients and their families. As a nationally recognized expert in cancer communication, decision-making and survivorship care, Dr. Katz has dedicated his career to improving the quality of the patient experience.

With funding support from the American Cancer Society, Dr. Katz's team leads the GIFT (Genetic Information and Family Testing) study, an initiative that identifies patients with hereditary cancer predispositions (such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes) and engages their families in home-based genetic testing. This research is advancing a new model of outreach that empowers families to understand their personal cancer risks, access preventive care that may be appropriate, and make more informed decisions about treatment and early detection.

"The American Cancer Society's mission-driven approach, focusing on outcomes as well as impact on patients and their families, has allowed our team to transform how breast cancer patients and survivors navigate treatment and survivorship," said Katz. "Funding our research ensures that breakthroughs in science translate into real-world benefits."

In his 2024 [publication](#) in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, Dr. Katz and his co-authors emphasized both the challenge and the opportunity in genetic testing and communication. His study found that breast cancer survivors who undergo genetic testing are significantly more likely to share clinically relevant results with their families, providing relatives with important insights into inherited cancer risks. This ripple effect can help prevent and detect cancer earlier among loved ones, underscoring the far-reaching impact of improved access to genetic counseling.

"Genetic counseling and testing are powerful tools, not only for patients but for their families,"

said Katz. “Our research underscores the urgent need to ensure all breast cancer survivors, regardless of background, have access to these services, so they can make informed decisions and help protect future generations.”

“By linking research directly to patient and family experiences, Dr. Katz has created new opportunities to improve cancer care and prevention for generations to come,” said [Dr. Christina Annunziata](#), senior vice president, extramural discovery science at the American Cancer Society. “Dr. Katz’s work exemplifies the American Cancer Society’s commitment to funding research that directly impacts patients’ lives and addresses critical gaps in care.”

The American Cancer Society is the largest non-governmental funder of cancer research in the United States, supporting more than \$100 million in breast cancer research to date. By investing in leading scientists like Dr. Katz, ACS continues to drive progress in prevention, treatment, and survivorship — with the ultimate goal of ending cancer as we know it, for everyone.

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