

The Damon Runyon-Jake Wetchler Award for Pediatric Innovation

Overview

The Damon Runyon-Jake Wetchler Award for Pediatric Innovation is given annually to one third-year Damon Runyon Fellow from across the Damon Runyon Fellowship Award, Damon Runyon Quantitative Biology Fellowship Award or the Damon Runyon-St. Jude Pediatric Cancer Research Fellowship Award Programs, whose research has the greatest potential to impact the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of one or more forms of pediatric cancer. The research can be focused on basic mechanistic or translational studies, as long as it has the potential to impact pediatric cancers.

The Award is made in memory of Jake Wetchler, a young man who fought with indomitable spirit against two cancers. At age 18, Jake was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma and beat the cancer into remission. But the chemotherapy he received gave him a second cancer, and with few effective treatments available, he lost his life to AML. Jake never let down in his fight against cancer, living with a powerful will and lively wit, and while cancer killed Jake it never defeated him. This Award in Jake's honor is intended to recognize scientists whose research helps to fight back against pediatric cancer, and whose innovative ideas and hard work may one day lead to advances so that young people like Jake are not taken from us and instead can live their lives and fulfill their promise.

Selection

Interested third-year Fellows should submit the following:

A paragraph (500 words or less) describing:

- In scientific terms, the potential impact your research could have on the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of one or more forms of pediatric cancer.
- To which specific pediatric cancer(s) your research is relevant.
- In detail, your role on the project (explain how much of the work described in your application is your work and how much was done by others in the lab.)

A summary describing the project and impact to pediatric cancer research in lay terms (1 page or less).

Applicant's Biosketch in compliance with [current NIH Guidelines](#).

Selection will be made by the Foundation and a subset of Selection Committee members. Submissions are due by Wednesday, July 15, 2026. Please send your paragraph, lay summary, and Biosketch as an email attachment to Emily R. Kaminsky, at emily.kaminsky@damonrunyon.org.

Funding

The Award is a one-time \$10,000 prize with no restrictions on its use. The winner will be announced by representatives of The Jake Wetchler Foundation at the Damon Runyon Fellows' Retreat in September.

"We at The Jake Wetchler Foundation partner with Damon Runyon because of their stalwart dedication to the cause of finding breakthroughs in the treatment of cancer and their knack for locating the talented scientists who can pull it off--that's you."