



Research supported by The ALS Association, through a \$1.4 million grant, has grown into a \$15 million program to identify biomarkers – things in the body like heart rate or fluid levels that can be measured in order to diagnose and track progression of a disease. Currently there are no biomarkers for ALS, making it a critical, unmet need in the field.

Target ALS [announced](#) “The Target ALS Diagnosis Initiative” in December – creating the first ever comprehensive research effort to discover this essential measurement tool.

The \$15 million will advance new approaches to biomarkers. It will be led by The ALS Association, Target ALS and 30 representatives from pharmaceutical, academic and non-profit foundations. Our contribution was made possible, in part, thanks to donations during Ice Bucket Challenge in 2015.

Additionally, The ALS Association will contribute to the first Target ALS Biofluid & Genomics Core. These cores are invaluable resources for scientists, and this new one will offer unprecedented access to individual patient data over time with biosamples,

and speech and language analysis. The innovation is made possible through a collaborative partnership between several organizations.

“This is a major milestone for Target ALS, as we’ve proven our ability to respond to the needs of the scientific community in ways that accelerate their work like never before,” said Target ALS Chief Executive Officer, Manish Raisinghani, MBBS, Ph.D. when Target ALS launched the initiative last month. “It’s been gratifying for our team to support scientists over the last seven years and know that we are spearheading access to essential resources that can help them realize life-changing benefits for people with ALS.”

“Our research program is built around funding projects that can attract follow-on funding that can move the work forward past our initial grant,” said Kuldip Dave, vice president of research at The ALS Association. Independent research has shown that research funded by The ALS Association is effectively leveraged for additional support.

The Target ALS Diagnosis Initiative was one of many exciting developments in ALS research in 2020.

“COVID hasn’t really stopped us,” said Jill Yersak, vice president of mission for The ALS Association, during [a recent appearance](#) on Connecting ALS. “We really continue to drive research toward finding cures and treatments for ALS.”

In 2020, The ALS Association funded 46 research projects around the world. To learn more about some of the highlights, [check out](#) our 2020 year-end report.



