

# TW Lewis Foundation commits \$2M matching gift to establish Melanoma Center of Excellence at Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center

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Tom Lewis, founder and CEO of T.W. Lewis Co., is no stranger to melanoma, the sixth most common cancer in the U.S. and the only one whose incidence is increasing.

Thirty years ago, Lewis lost his father to the disease, and when he was diagnosed three years ago, he was scared.

"I came through it fine," he said. "It's a scary thing, like any form of cancer. It's an unusual form of cancer and is becoming more and more prevalent in Arizona."

When he needed treatment, he didn't know of any place in Arizona that specialized in melanoma treatment.

Even though Phoenix-based Banner Health partnered with University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to open the Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Gilbert in September 2011, it didn't yet have the expertise Lewis needed.

"I even talked to the people at Banner years ago when I had cancer and they directed me to Houston," he said.

So he traveled to Houston to receive treatment at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

"Not everybody can afford to do that," he said. "But I was able to do that, to find one of the best places to go."

That's why his T.W. Lewis Foundation is committing a \$2 million matching gift, which will go toward establishing a Melanoma Center of Excellence at Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center.

"What we want to do is to create a world-class center for melanoma so that it will be right here in Arizona for Arizonans," he said.

Nearly 90 percent of melanoma cases are related to UV exposure, making Arizona among the states with the highest death rates. The five-year survival rate for those diagnosed with Stage IV melanoma ranges from 15 to 20 percent. Those who do survive are much more likely than the general population to develop additional melanomas.

## Angela Gonzales

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T.W. Lewis Co. Founder Tom Lewis and his wife Jan.