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Media Contact:
Jennifer Isakowitz
215.391.4666 / jisakowitz@nmajh.org

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH BEGINS TODAY,
CELEBRATING CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICANS JEWS TO OUR NATION

The 2017 theme is *American Jews in Medical Research*

Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), a national commemoration of the contributions that Americans Jews have made to the fabric of our nation’s history, culture, and society, begins today, May 1. This year, JAHM celebrates Americans Jews who have made a significant impact in the field of medical research. Now in its 12th year, JAHM encourages people of all backgrounds to learn about and draw inspiration from the more than 360-year history of Jewish life in this country.

“The stories of American Jews are woven into the rich history of this diverse nation,” says **Ivy Barsky**, CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of the National Museum of American Jewish History, the lead sponsor of JAHM. “By celebrating JAHM, we honor the values of inclusion, acceptance, and religious liberty cherished by this country. This year’s focus on *American Jews in Medical Research* invites deeper exploration of one of the many facets of American life impacted by this community.”

According to Dr. **Gary P. Zola**, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and a member of JAHM’s Board of Directors, “The Jewish experience in America constitutes a soaring tribute to the noble ideals upon which this republic

was founded. It is a timely story that will lift our national spirit by assuring us that liberty and opportunity ultimately triumph over bigotry and divisiveness.”

“The celebration of a nationwide Jewish American Heritage Month is now in its second decade and it has never been so important,” shares **Greg Rosenbaum**, President of Palisades Associates, Inc. and member of JAHM’s Board of Directors. “In nervous times where anti-Jewish sentiments and actions appear to be on the rise, telling the story of Jewish contributions to making all Americans’ lives better is a way to educate our fellow citizens and counter stereotypes.”

JAHM’s interactive website, JAHM.us, provides educational resources to facilitate the nationwide engagement around this year’s celebration. A variety of events taking place across the country are listed on the [events calendar](#), and all are encouraged to submit their own exhibitions, concerts, gallery talks, film screenings, lectures, or other related programs. Website visitors will also find stories about American Jews in the medical field and other industries, a historical timeline, lesson plans, reading lists, programming ideas, and more. The [Medical Pioneers digital booklet](#) highlights stories of three noted researchers.

JAHM’s 2017 theme provides an opportunity to recognize the many American Jews who have made invaluable contributions to the field of medical research. Biochemist **Gertrude Elion** (1918-1999) developed life-saving drugs, including the first chemotherapy for childhood leukemia and treatments for lupus, hepatitis, arthritis, gout, and other diseases. Virologist **Jonas Salk** (1914-1995) created the first vaccines against polio, and geneticist **Baruch Blumberg** (1925-2011) discovered the Hepatitis B virus and helped develop the first vaccine to prevent it. **Mathilde Krim** (b. 1926), the founding chair of amfAR (the American Foundation for AIDS Research), received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000 for her commitment to AIDS patients and research; neuroscientist **Eric Richard Kandel** (b. 1929) received the 2000 Nobel Prize for his research on the physiological basis of memory storage in neurons; and medical physicist **Rosalyn S. Yalow** (1921-2011) became the second woman to win a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine when she shared the 1977 prize for her work in the development of radioimmunoassay, a technique used to measure minute amounts of substances in the body. The groundbreaking medical research conducted by these dedicated individuals, among countless others, continues to improve and save lives.

Visit JAHM.us for more information, and join the conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) using the hashtag #JAHM.

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About Jewish American Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) is a national month of recognition of the more than 360-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture, celebrated in May. JAHM acknowledges the achievements of Jewish Americans in fields ranging from sports and arts and entertainment to medicine, business, science, government and military service. For more information, visit www.JAHM.us and connect on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action. The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.