

# ACS CAN Secures Landmark Federal Wins for Cancer Patients in the FY26 Funding & Health Package



In one of the most challenging and complex environments Washington has faced in years, the **American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)** demonstrated the power of strategic, patient-centered advocacy. At a moment when a proposed 40% cut to cancer research funding threatened future progress, our coordinated work helped secure substantial increases in funding for cancer research and prevention. And after years of persistence, partnership, and determination, we are thrilled to have successfully advanced multi-cancer early detection legislation across the finish line.

## What's in the Package: Protecting Progress & Investing in Innovation

Despite enormous fiscal pressure and turbulence across the biomedical landscape, the final FY26 package increased or maintained funding across major cancer priorities.

### Research and Prevention Agencies

- **National Institutes of Health (NIH): +\$415M to \$47.2B total**
- **National Cancer Institute (NCI): +\$128M to \$7.35B total**
- **Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H): Maintained at \$1.5B**
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cancer programs: +\$3M to \$413M total, including \$1M in additional support for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP)**
- **CDC Office on Smoking and Health (OSH): Maintained at \$247M**

### Safeguarding Grant Capacity at NIH & NCI

In collaboration with partners such as ACT for NIH, ACS CAN secured important guardrails to limit how much funding can be used for forward funding research grants. These protections are a critical step toward safeguarding the cancer research and clinical trials pipeline. In FY25, the expanded use of forward funding resulted in 20% fewer new grants. By limiting this mechanism going forward, we can help ensure continued investment in new cancer studies and clinical trials.

### Meaningful Progress for Childhood Cancer

The legislation advanced multiple pediatric cancer priorities:

- **Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act**, streamlining out-of-state Medicaid provider enrollment
- **Mikaela Naylor Give Kids a Chance Act**, strengthening FDA authority with respect to pediatric research obligations and restoration of important pediatric research incentives.
- **\$50M** for the **Childhood Cancer Data Initiative (CCDI)**, including expanded support for the Molecular Characterization Initiative
- **\$30M** for continued implementation of the **Childhood Cancer STAR Act**
- **\$2M** for **CDC efforts to improve childhood and adolescent cancer registry data**

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## FY26 Protecting Cancer Cures Advocacy—By the Numbers

Since launching Protect Cancer Cures, ACS CAN's team and volunteers drove extraordinary, nationwide advocacy:

- **855+ earned media placements**, spanning all 50 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, and Guam
- **130,000** messages delivered to congressional offices
- **9,800+** constituent phone calls placed directly into congressional offices
- **51,000+** petition signatures urging robust federal funding for cancer research and prevention
- Launch of the **Voices of Cancer Research** site to feature and elevate patient and survivor stories

## A Breakthrough for Early Detection

**One of the most impactful elements of the package is the inclusion of legislation creating a pathway for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection (MCED) tests once FDA-approved and clinical benefit is shown.** With the passage of the Nancy Gardner Sewell Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act, Medicare will be able to cover FDA-approved MCED tests that demonstrate clinical benefit—opening access to innovation for millions of beneficiaries once the science is ready.

The MCED bill, was first introduced in 2020 and from the beginning ACS CAN led the charge to build exceptionally strong bicameral, bipartisan support. With 68 Senate sponsors and 339 House sponsors, **the MCED Act became the most supported legislation of the 119th Congress**—the result of five years of sustained, coordinated advocacy by ACS CAN staff and volunteers nationwide.

## MCED Advocacy—By the Numbers:

- **145,000+ constituent messages** and **90,000 petitions** delivered directly to members of Congress
- **60 volunteers** attending committee hearings and markups
- **40+ personalized letters** to key committee members
- **330+ earned media placements** and **paid advertising, generating 34 million impressions**

**These achievements reflect ACS CAN's superpower of engaging advocates to drive impact.**

From congressional offices and district town halls to state fairs, tailgate events, and social platforms, volunteers lifted their stories and ensured lawmakers heard directly from those whose lives depend on continued progress and access to cancer breakthroughs.

## Why It Matters

- We compelled Congress to secure meaningful research and prevention funding in a year when many federal programs faced significant cuts and even elimination.
- Our advocacy advanced a breakthrough policy that could change the future of cancer screening.
- ACS CAN volunteers showed up everywhere, from town halls to social media to Capitol Hill, and Congress responded.
- The impact can not be overstated—this is one of the strongest federal wins for cancer patients in years.