



2026 Virginia CANCER ACTION DAY

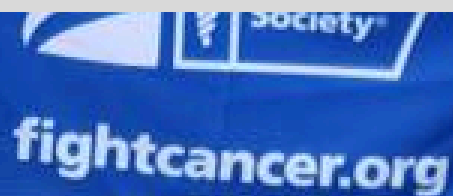
Cancer Action Day 2026



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Welcome to Cancer Action Day



Dear Advocates,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in our 2026 Cancer Action Day.

As a leading health advocacy organization, we work every day to encourage elected officials to make cancer a top priority. We support evidence-based solutions designed to eliminate major health problems. And together, we bring together ordinary people with extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard.

We want our Cancer Action Day to be an opportunity for all of our volunteers to come together, unite our voices, and ask our elected officials to actively support the fight against cancer. We hope you will find our event energizing, exciting, and personally rewarding.

Included in this packet and your folder are all the resources you will need to advocate successfully with your lawmakers. We truly appreciate your commitment to advocacy and look forward to the great accomplishments we'll achieve together.

Thank you for all you do to help us fight cancer.

Keep fighting!

Let's get started!

Introductions: Virginia Staff



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Introductions: Virginia Lead Volunteers



Stacey Markendorff
State Lead Ambassador



Cody Wolf, Ph.D.
Vice State Lead Ambassador

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Agenda: Timeline of Events



8:00 a.m. Check In, Breakfast, and Networking

*Location: General Assembly Building, 201 N 9th St,
Richmond, VA 23219*

- *House Subcommittee Room 9 (Floor 9)*

8:15 a.m. Welcome: Our Plan and Purpose

*Marc Mazza, Regional Senior Manager
Stacey Markendorff, State Lead Ambassador
Cody Wolf, Vice State Lead Ambassador*

8:30 a.m. Policy Updates: Understanding Our Ask

Mollie Montague, Government Relations Director

8:45 a.m. Keynote Speaker:

Senator Russet W. Perry

9:00 a.m. Meetings with Lawmakers & Volunteers

11:30 p.m. Those available meet Mollie in 1st floor entry atrium to proceed to capitol for recognition from the gallery of the Senate.

12:30 p.m. Optional lunch:

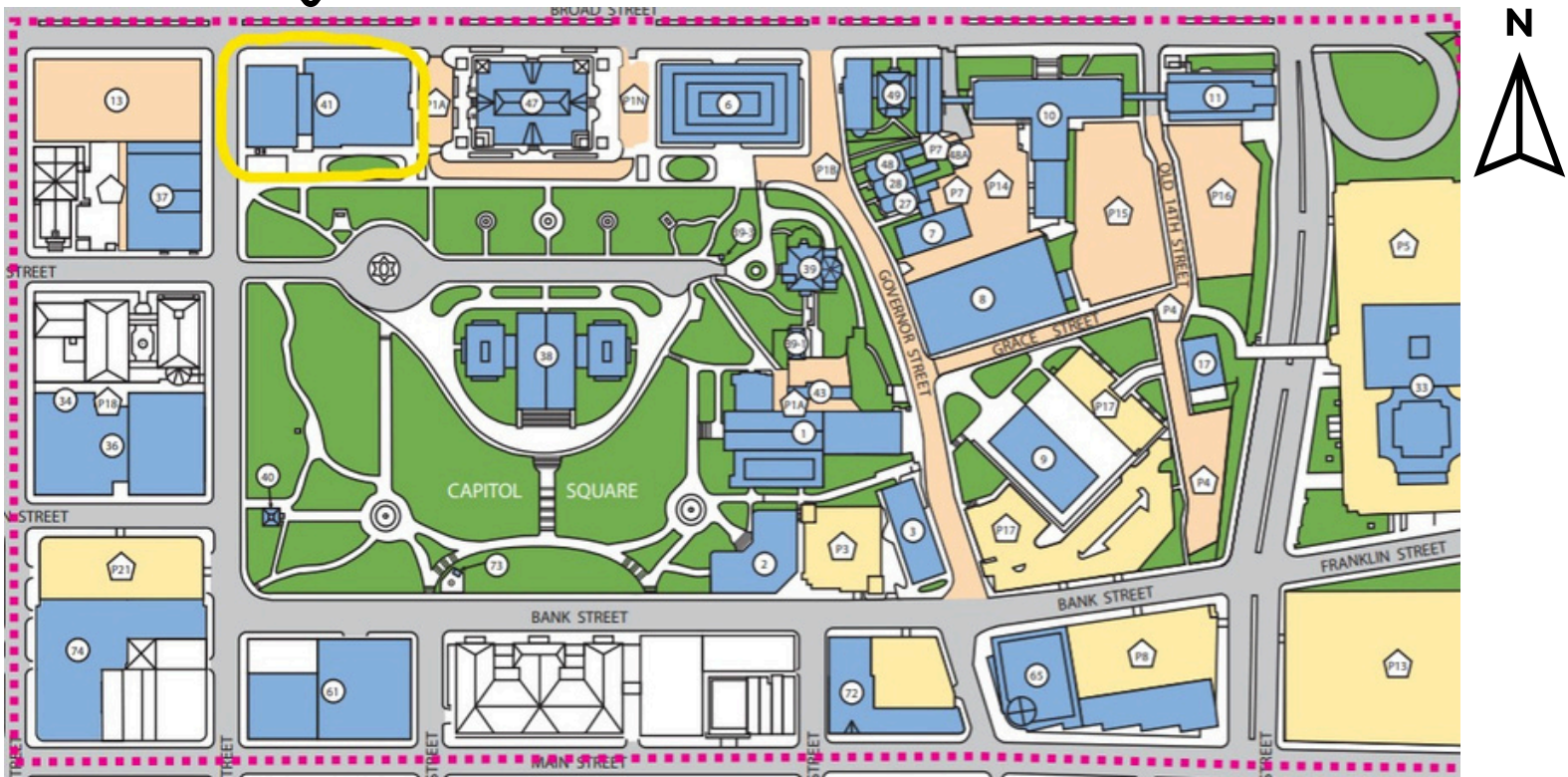
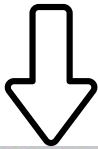
Meriwether's Cafe in the General Assembly Building

#VACancerActionDay

Virginia Capitol Grounds Map



Building circled in yellow is the
General Assembly Building



#VACancerActionDay

General Assembly Floor Directory



General Assembly Building Floor Directory

Lower Level

House Room A
Tunnel Entrance to Capitol

1st Floor

Information
Capitol Police Security Screening
Commonwealth Room
Constituency Center
Dining
Press Room

2nd Floor

House Committee Operations
House Rooms B and C
House North and South Subcommittee Rooms
House Briefing Room
House Burgess Room

3rd Floor

Senate Committee Operations
Senate Rooms A, B and C
Senate Subcommittee Room

4th Floor

Division of Legislative Services
House Information Systems
Senate Briefing Room
Senate Fiscal and Human Resources

5th Floor

Senate Member Offices
Senate Post Office
Senate Subcommittee Room
Senate Support Services

6th Floor

Senate Member Offices
Senate Subcommittee Room North and South

7th Floor

House Member Offices
House North and South Conference Rooms

8th Floor

House Member Offices
House 8th Floor Meeting Room

9th Floor

House Member Offices
House 9th Floor Meeting Room

10th Floor

House Member Offices
House 10th Floor Meeting Room

11th Floor

House Member Offices
House Human Resources
House Finance
House Post Office
House Support Services

12th Floor

House Appropriations Chair & Vice Chair
House Appropriations Room
House Appropriations Staff
House Training Room

13th Floor

Senate Finance and Appropriations Room
Senate Finance and Appropriations Staff
Senate Information Systems

14th Floor

House Speaker
House Majority and Minority Leaders
Senate Leadership
Senate Leadership Conference Room
Speaker's Conference Room

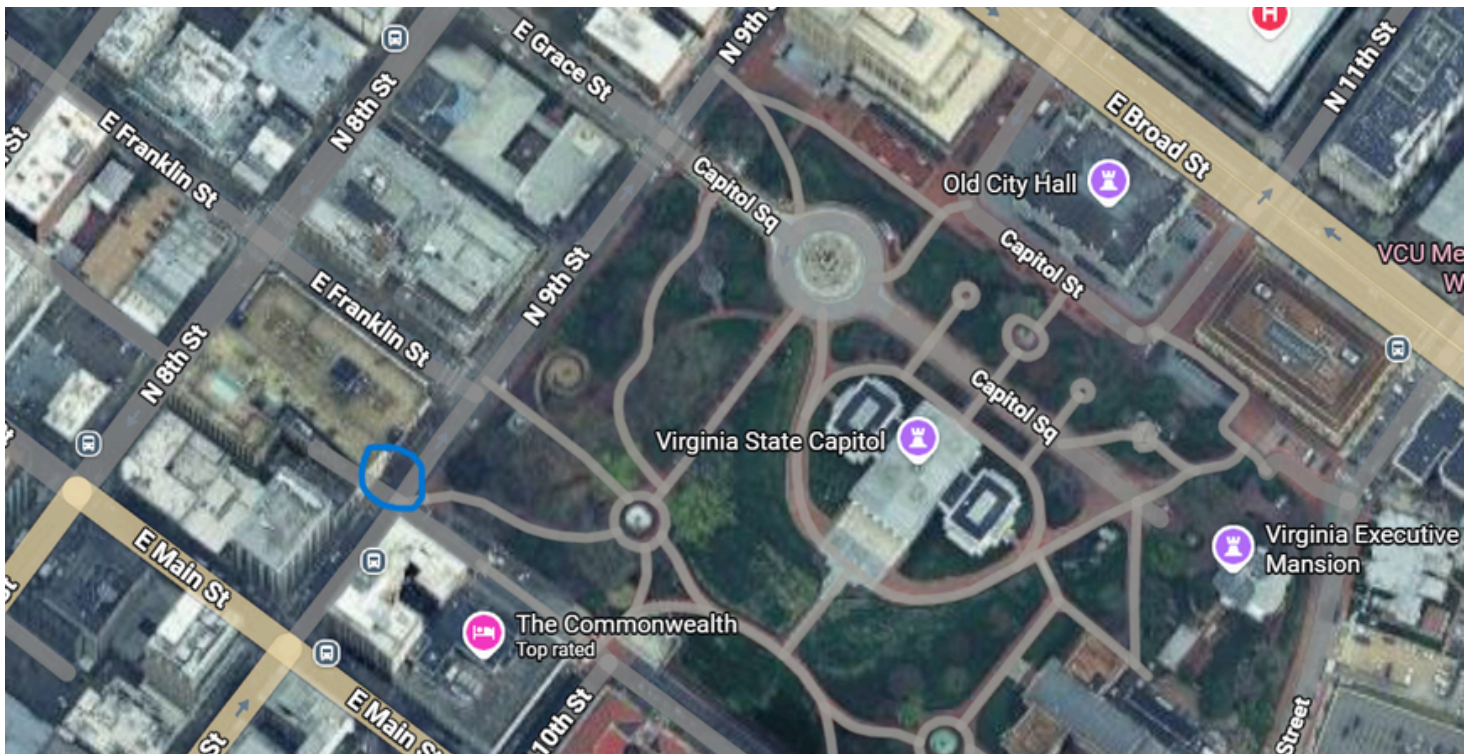
Virginia Capitol Parking & ADA Accessibility



Parking: Parking for Capitol Square visitors is available from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. in the 9th and Franklin Street Parking Deck. (circled in blue on the map). Parking rates are \$5/hour or \$20/day (debit or credit cards only). Visitors must take their ticket with them for re-entry into parking facility. Parking fees can be reimbursed using our Expense Form. There is a link to the Expense Form on the VA Cancer Action Day Resource website and physical copies will be provided at the event.

This parking deck can be accessed by heading North on 9th street after turning onto or crossing Main Street. Immediately after the Bank Street stop light the parking deck entrance is on the left. Below is a map showing the paid public parking deck (circled in blue) and you can enter the following address into your GPS: 20 N 9th St, Richmond, VA 23219.

ADA Accessibility Within the General Assembly Building: The first pedestrian entrance to the Capitol Grounds is ADA accessible. The building has wheelchair accessible restrooms, ramps and elevators. There is barrier-free access on all floors. If you need additional assistance, please contact marc.mazza@cancer.org.



Virginia General Assembly Visitor Directions



How to find the Cancer Action Day event:

Visitor Entrance (Year-Round): General Assembly Building, 201 N 9th St, Richmond, VA 23219

For security checkpoint:

- No firearms or weapons are allowed.
- If you have a purse, keep your keys and phone in it.
- If you do not have a purse, security will provide a bowl to put these in.

Once through the checkpoint, you'll enter the 1st floor atrium with an information desk.

- Restrooms and water fountains are down the hall to the left of the information desk.
- We will provide coffee and breakfast, however if you would like any additional food/drink, Merriweather's Cafe is to the right of the information desk down the hall.
- The atrium is where we will gather at 11:30

Take either hallway beside the information desk to the elevators directly behind the atrium.

- Go to the 9th Floor

Directly outside the elevators on the 9th floor navigate to House Subcommittee Room 900.

- **Go through either exit from the elevators towards room house subcommittee room 900 at the end of the hallway.**
- Signage showing the layout of the floor is available between the elevators on the 9th floor and signs in the hallway will also point to numbered rooms.
- The building is designed as a circle! So even if you make a wrong turn, you'll find us!

You'll see our smiling faces when you get there!



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Provide Better Choices for Virginians with Cancer: Predictable Costs, Protected Livelihoods, and a Healthier Future

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) Priorities

50,000 Virginians will face cancer this year. Help them survive and build a cancer-free future for Virginia.

Accessing and Affording Care

- **SB 161 (Sen. Perry) and HB 625 (Del. Henson) – Out-of-Pocket Cost Transparency**

Virginians deserve real choices and no surprises. SB 161 requires insurers to offer at least some plans with flat-dollar copays for prescription drugs, instead of only coinsurance options, giving patients an option to choose a plan with predictability and control over their budgets.

Transparency saves lives, because when patients can plan the cost of care, they're less likely to abandon treatment.

- **SB 2 (Sen. Boysco) and HB 1207 (Del. Sewell) – Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML)**

Cancer treatment is time-intensive and unpredictable. Without paid leave, patients and caregivers face impossible choices: delay lifesaving treatment or lose their livelihood and health coverage. SB 2 ensures workers can take time to address serious health conditions or care for loved ones while receiving partial wage replacement.

Less financial hardship. Stronger health outcomes. Greater job security.

- **HB 435 (Del. LaVere Bolling) – Palliative Care**

Expands access to palliative care and timely information and support. It addresses major gaps and reduces disparities while delivering cost savings and improved quality of life for patients and families.

Early palliative care reduces hospital costs by 22–32%, cuts ICU use, and shortens costly hospital stays, all while improving patient outcomes and lowering caregiver burden.

- **HB 87 (Del. Laufer) – Patient-to-Provider Coverage**

Ensures patients access to providers they trust, improving continuity of care and treatment.

- **Every Women's Life (EWL), Virginia Cancer Registry, and Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Funding**

Support budget amendments to protect free screenings and the efforts to combat cancer in Virginia.

Save Virginia's Quitline, Protect Cancer Prevention

- **Save the Tobacco Quitline and Comprehensive Tobacco Program!**

Funding for the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program will end in April '26 unless the state acts, ending the Quitline, leaving thousands without cessation support. Support the budget amendment of \$2.6M annually to sustain Quitline services and prevention programs. Quitline users are 2–3 times more likely to quit than those who try alone, and the program saves \$3.16 for every \$1 spent in medical costs and productivity losses.

Without this funding, Virginia would be the only state without a Quitline. This investment prevents cancer, heart disease, and other leading causes of death while reducing health care costs.

- **HB 220 (Del. Hope) – Tobacco Surcharge Sunset Repeal**

Tobacco surcharges on health insurance premiums do not help people quit. Instead, they make coverage unaffordable, reducing enrollment and access to preventive care, and disproportionately harming low-income Virginians and communities of color. *Aligns access to coverage and cessation resources with evidence-based strategies to reduce tobacco use without creating financial barriers.*

Virginia 2026

Legislative Asks & Talking Points



1 Support Transparent Choices for Patient's Budgets

Support SB 161/ HB 1207 (Senator Perry / Delegate Henson) - This bill offers certainty, choice, and transparency at a time when Virginia families need it most.

- 31% of Virginians fear they will be unable to pay for needed prescriptions in the next year.
- Under many existing health plans, patients must pay coinsurance, meaning they owe a percentage of a drug's total price.
- Patients often have no idea what a prescription will cost until they reach the pharmacy counter.
- For Virginians with cancer or chronic diseases, coinsurance can mean thousands in one month, even with insurance.
- Co-pay-only plans let patients know exactly what they will pay each month. That predictability helps families budget, stay on treatment, and avoid harmful cost-related delays.
- This bill was introduced in 2024 and was sent to HIRC. HIRC took no action on it.
- Premium impact applies only to those who choose the predictable co-pay option and plans must be clearly named and marketed to help consumers compare options.
- No cost to the Commonwealth. Maryland, Montana, Minnesota, Louisiana, and more have implemented similar laws with no major issues.
- Virginia already uses this model in the State Employee Health Plan; all cancer patients deserve the same level of predictability.

2 Save the Tobacco Quitline and Virginia's Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs

Federal funding for these programs will end April 28th, and without state funds, Virginia will be the only state without a tobacco quitline. This would leave 4,000 Virginians annually without access to proven cessation and cancer prevention resources.

- Smoking is linked to 4 of the 5 leading causes of preventable death—cancer, stroke, heart disease, and chronic lower respiratory disease. Funding this program directly reduces these disease burdens.
- Quitlines work! 30–32% quit rates for tobacco and e-cigarette users seven months after receiving services and people who use Quitlines are 2–3 times more likely to quit than those who try alone.
- RVO Health estimates \$3.16 saved for every \$1 invested through reduced medical expenses, fewer hospital visits, and avoided productivity losses.
- Support a \$2.6M annual investment that will preserve life-saving services, prevent cancer, and protect public health, all while delivering a strong return for Virginia.

3 Support Paid Family Medical Leave

Support SB 2/ HB 1207 (Senator Boysko / Delegate Sewell) - Paid Leave helps cancer patients complete treatment, stay financially stable, and keep their jobs.

- 40% of cancer survivors are of working age, relying on income and employer based health insurance to stay in treatment.
- Research shows that cancer patients with access to paid leave have higher job retention, lower financial burden, and better ability to complete treatment.

Hook, Line, and Sinker



The hook, line and sinker strategy will help ensure you cover key messages and conduct an effective and successful meeting with your lawmaker.

Hook: Who You Are

Tell them who you are. Remember, you are a voter, a survivor/caregiver/advocate and their constituent. Make sure everyone in the group introduces themselves.

Be careful. A little small talk is acceptable but stay on message and don't be drawn into storytelling off topic – you'll never know where the time went!

State why you are here by introducing the ask/s.

Line: Share your stories and statistics.

Be informative, be thorough and be concise. Provide your lawmaker with personal stories. They'll appreciate real-life examples that put a human face on the issue. Discuss how the legislation will directly affect you, your friends and your family. Personal stories truly make an impact and achieve results.

Sinker: The Request

Ask your legislator their position on the issue. Be polite, direct and specific. Wait for their response. It is important to get a clear answer to provide on your report back form.

Answer any questions to the best of your ability. If you don't know the answer, it's OK to say "that's a good question, I'm not positive on the answer, and I'll need to get back to you." Don't answer any questions you're not 100% sure you know the answer to – make sure to list them on your report back forms. This is an excellent opportunity for staff to follow-up with the lawmaker after our day!

Leave on a positive note. As you wrap up the conversation, repeat one last time what action you hope the lawmaker will support. Make sure your lawmaker and/or their staff member receives a copy of the leave-behind materials. Thank them for their time and offer to be an ongoing resource.

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Hook, Line, and Sinker, Continued



Hook

Who you are, where you're from -- Leader introduces the rest of the group. A constituent of the lawmaker should lead the meeting.

"We are here to today to ask for..."

Line

What is the problem we are trying to solve? _____

What is the proposed policy solution?

What is a data point to back up that solution? _____

Share your cancer connection and how it relates to the ask.

Add your personal story:

Why are you passionate about the fight against cancer?

How can you find a connection to the days asks? _____

Sinker

"In conclusion..."

We're asking _____

Will you support [State Issue] to help cancer patients by

Lawmaker Meetings: Suggested Script



Hook

“Thank you, Delegate/Senator _____, for taking the time to meet with your cancer-fighting constituents today. My name is _____, I am a volunteer with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), and I live in Delegate/Senator District, and **I am a constituent of yours.**

With me are constituents and advocates from around your district to talk about their cancer stories. **Introduce constituent(s) in the room with you.**

Line

Thank you for taking the time meet with us. We would like to discuss a few key priorities for cancer patients and their families. Primarily, we ask for your support for **HB 625/SB 121 Health insurance: limit on cost-sharing payments for prescription drugs under certain plans.**

- *Include a fact from the Talking Points document.*

This is important to me because (share your personal story and connect it to the importance of predictability/transparency/affordability of medication. If another volunteer has a personal story that has a strong connection, please introduce them and have them speak. Keep it brief.)

Sinker

The ASK: Will you support the following bills when they come before you?

- HB 625/SB 121 Health insurance: limit on cost-sharing payments for prescription drugs under certain plans.
- HB 1207/SB 2 (Senator Boysko / Delegate Henson) - Paid Leave helps cancer patients complete treatment, stay financially stable, and keep their jobs.
- Funding for Tobacco Quitline and Virginia’s Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs

Remember, we want to hear a yes or no answer.

- If your elected official answers yes to this question that is great! Thank him/her for their support.
- If your member answers no, ask why and if there is further information you can provide after the meeting.
 - Include that information on your report back form.
- If your member doesn’t give a direct yes or no answer, ask for clarification.
- You should plan to follow-up to ensure their questions are answered and check on their level of support.

Please note: this script is a framework for your conversation. Please feel free to elaborate and share your personal cancer story and use information from the fact sheet and talking points.

Lawmaker Meeting Schedule



How are your lawmaker meetings scheduled?

- You have been assigned to a volunteer team based on your State Senate District. Each team has a designated Team Captain—an experienced cancer advocate—who has already contacted your Delegate and Senator to schedule meetings for Cancer Action Day. Thank you to our Team Captains for making this possible!
- Your Team Captain will have a physical copy of the lawmaker meeting schedule. On Cancer Action Day, you'll be introduced to your team and work together to discuss your game plan for office visits.
- If you're new to meeting with lawmakers, no worries. Our system ensures you will always be part of a group and accompanied by passionate, experienced cancer advocates.
- A special thank you to the following Team Captains who worked hard to schedule meetings:
 - Stacey Markendorff, State Lead Ambassador
 - Cody Wolf, Ph.D., Vice State Lead Ambassador
 - Ashley Ferguson, Ambassador Constituent Team Lead
 - Frances Ruley, Ambassador Constituent Team Lead
 - Holly Tenaglia, Ambassador Constituent Team Lead
 - Bonita Sherman, Ambassador Constituent Team Lead
 - Elisabeth Drabkin, Ambassador Constituent Team Lead, SLA Emeritus
 - Darlene Parker, Legislative Ambassador



Lawmaker Meeting: Do & Don't



Do:

- Look and act professional
- Introduce yourself and tell the legislator where you are from
- Respect staff, they are important advocates for you to the member.
- Stay on message
- Be prepared to wait
- Let them know the GRD is available for further questions
- Know the asks and something about it
- Be efficient and articulate; the meeting should be brief and concise
- Ask for your legislator's support for the issue
- Stop discussing the issue if you get a "Yes"
- Leave a one-pager about the issue
- Turn off your cell phone
- Thank the lawmaker (be sure to also send a thank-you note)

Don't:

- Attempt to answer questions you don't know the answer to or commit to anything you aren't certain of
- Get angry or hostile
- Get distracted by small talk
- Mention your political affiliation
- Leave behind materials that aren't provided in this packet
- Lobby on other issues
- Get angry if the member has to run to a meeting or you get the chief of staff
- Get defensive if an elected official doesn't support our legislation

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Report Back Form



**HOW WAS YOUR
LAWMAKER MEETING?**

Report back and let us know how your meeting went

Your feedback helps our staff provide additional information to lawmakers and make strategic decisions in successful campaigns. Share with us what you heard from your lawmaker during your recent visit.

Remember: One report back form should be completed for each lawmaker meeting

Scan the QR code or visit:

www.fightcancer.org/reportback



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Social Media



Before Event

- Draft 3 social media posts that you can later copy and paste.
 - Who do you want to reach?
 - What story are you trying to tell?
 - What is one fact you want people to know?
- Share your personal story related to our asks at Cancer Action Day the night before.
- Follow your lawmakers on social media

During Event

- Don't forget to post about what's happening in real time!
- Use #VACancerActionDay in every post.
- Post updates, pictures, and tag lawmakers who volunteers are visiting.
- Tell lawmakers and their staff about our hashtag (#VACancerActionDay) and handle and encourage them to use it.
- Thank lawmakers for meeting with us in a post and tag them in it. If possible, include a photo with the lawmaker for better engagement.
- Post an accompanying action alert for your campaign on your social media channels.

After Event

- Post pictures of lawmaker meetings and tag their handles. Remember to mention the legislation or campaign discussed and include the event hashtag.
- Share and engage with other volunteers' posts. Like, share, and comment.
- Share @ACSCANVA posts on social media

Social Media, Continued



Sample Posts

- Great meeting with [[@LAWMAKERHANDLE](#)] during [[#YOURHASHTAG](#)] and discussing why it's so important to [[state issue](#)] in [[STATE](#)]. Let them know why you think it's important, too!
- Spending the day at the [[STATE](#)] Capitol with [[@ACSCANSTATEHANDLE](#)] asking lawmakers to make [[state issue](#)] a priority! [[#YOURHASHTAG](#)]
- Thank you [[@LAWMAKERHANDLE](#)] for making [[state issue](#)] a top priority! [[#YOURHASHTAG](#)]
- [[@ACSCANSTATEHANDLE](#)] volunteers will be talking to lawmakers in 1 week at [[#YOURHASHTAG](#)] about [[#state issue](#)]. Check back for photos & updates!

[#VACancerActionDay](#)

Post-Event



Congratulations!

Cancer action day is completed! You should feel proud of the effort and the impact of your meetings.

Follow the steps below to properly wrap up your experience and tie any loose ends.

Social Media Posts:

Thank you @[legislator handle] for meeting with @ACSCANVA volunteers today to hear our stories and policy priorities. Together we can #FightCancer [#VACancerActionDay]

Sorry we missed you, @[Legislator handle], during @ACSCANVA Cancer Action Day. We hope you will prioritize cancer patients in your policy positions this session. #VA

Hand-Written Notes:

Writing a hand-written note provides a personal touch and builds rapport. Write a note for any legislators who you wanted to speak to, but weren't able. Just a quick "sorry we missed you".

Writing a brief thank you note for all legislators who took the time to meet with you is also a great idea!

Stay Involved:

Follow us on social media. Twitter: @ACSCANVA Instagram: @acscanvirginia
Visit our state website: <https://www.fightcancer.org/states/virginia>
Sign up to volunteer! [fightcancer.org/volunteer-for-acscan](https://www.fightcancer.org/volunteer-for-acscan)

Remember:

Cancer Action Day is only one way to advance our priorities.

Think about how you can leverage this event to continue our life-saving work back home.

What do I wear?

Professional/business casual dress. Comfortable shoes are important! You will be walking between offices.

What time do I need to be at the Capitol? When are we done?

We suggest arriving at the Capitol at 7:30am so you have time to park and walk to the General Assembly Building. We will wrap up by 1:00pm.

Who should I contact with questions?

Marc Mazza, Regional Senior Manager

- Phone: (845) 728-9700
- Email: Marc.Mazza@cancer.org

Mollie Montague, Government Relations Director

- Phone: (804) 832-9017
- Email: Mollie.Montague@cancer.org

What should I bring with me?

- Water
- A watch/cell phone to keep track of time
- A notebook to take additional notes during lawmaker meetings

Can we watch a committee hearing or general session?

Yes! We hope to take most of the group to the start of the Senate floor session to be recognized by Senator Perry. If you wish to stay and watch from the gallery, you may. Otherwise, you can watch session and committee hearings [online](#).