

# **Protecting Cancer Cures**

## **Volunteer Toolkit**

### **Spring & Summer 2025**



# Protecting Cancer Cures



## Cuts Have Consequences Congress: Protect Cancer Cures

The threats to the public investment in cancer research and timely access to health care could have wide scale impact and reverse years of progress. Cancer cures are in jeopardy due to cuts in research funding, staff reductions and policy shifts at the NIH and NCI. The long-standing, broad consensus of support enjoyed by America's premiere research institutions is under threat, putting cancer cures and America's leadership in cancer innovation at risk. Cancer patients can't wait for clinical trials or advances in drug development. Delays in innovation across the cancer continuum – from screening and early detection to treatment and cures – will cost lives.

This toolkit will assist volunteers in activating and mobilizing around ACS CAN's effort to protect cancer cures. Our goal is to protect cancer research at NIH and NCI and secure the highest possible funding as part of the FY26 appropriations process, and volunteer voices will be key to our success.

Volunteer leaders are encouraged to work with their staff partners to share this toolkit with fellow volunteers and get the word out that ACS CAN is calling on Congress to stand in support of the NIH and NCI, and reject actions that undermine cancer research and prevention efforts.

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# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Core message & talking points



## Cuts Have Consequences

### Congress: Protect Cancer Cures

#### Core Message

*Cancer has touched all of us in one way or another, and for years there has been a bipartisan commitment to reliable funding for our leading researchers and their institutions. But the current actions that have frozen funding, slashed staffing, and the talk of future funding cuts for lifesaving cancer research is unacceptable. These cuts will have life-threatening consequences. Fewer people will have access to clinical trials; researchers on the cusp of new discoveries will be forced to shut off the lights; hope will be lost. Cuts have consequences; we need Congress to protect cancer cures.*

#### Talking Points:

- Future cancer cures are in jeopardy due to dramatic and unprecedented proposed reductions in research funding, staff eliminations, and policy shifts at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Cancer Institute (NCI).
- In 2025, over 2 million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer, with 18 million cancer survivors currently in the U.S.
- In the last 30 years, thanks to the federal government's substantial and steady increases in cancer research funding, discovery and innovation have led to a 34% decline in cancer mortality rates.
- The last 10 years alone have seen the addition of an entirely new class of cancer therapeutics in the form of immunotherapy, complementing previous standards of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy.
- The administration has recommended an \$18 billion cut to the NIH, taking funding back to levels seen in 2003, and as far back as the mid-1990s when considering biomedical inflation.
- As my voice in Congress, I ask that you stand up for continued progress in the fight against cancer, not take us backward.
- Cuts have consequences. And those consequences are life threatening for cancer patients who could be waiting for the next clinical trial or research breakthrough.
- This is not a partisan issue. Cancer affects individuals and families across the political spectrum and across the country, everyone has a shared responsibility as we battle this disease.
- Cuts to research funding would deal a devastating blow to cancer patients and their families, and the United States could lose its global competitive edge in biomedical research.
- Other countries, such as China, are ready to step in to fill the void should the United States reduce federal funding for cancer research programs.
- Please support the highest possible funding for cancer research with \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), \$7.934 billion for cancer research at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

# Cancer Research Delivers Breakthroughs and Hope



## Protect and Increase National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute Funding in FY2026

Increased and sustained investment at NIH and NCI in the fight against cancer year over year has been key to reducing the nation's cancer mortality rate by 34% since 1991 and will bring us closer to ending cancer as we know it, for everyone.

### We can't afford to lose momentum



14.2 million life-years added

NCI-supported clinical trials added 14.2 million life-years to patients with cancer, at an average cost of \$326 per life-year gained.<sup>1</sup>



407,782 jobs and \$94.58 billion in 2024

In 2024, NIH research grants supported 407,782 jobs and generated \$94.58 billion in new economic activity in all 50 states and DC.<sup>2</sup>



18 million+ cancer survivors in the U.S.<sup>3</sup>

### Advances realized thanks to NIH and NCI funding...

- ✓ Outsmarting drug-resistant tumors
- ✓ New drug combinations for aggressive breast cancer
- ✓ Early identification of lung and pancreatic cancers
- ✓ Treating pediatric brain tumors with CAR-T
- ✓ Effective early treatment for aggressive colorectal cancer
- ✓ Blood tests for multi-cancer screening
- ✓ Breakthroughs in immunotherapy

### Every cancer cure starts with federally funded research. Cuts have consequences.

Cutting federally funded cancer research endangers the lives of cancer patients by stalling critical breakthroughs just as they near clinical application. Patients rely on these innovations, and without sustained investment, research momentum will halt, delaying or derailing lifesaving therapies and diagnostics. Clinical trials will vanish, particularly in rural areas where cancer outcomes are already worse, and a generation of early-career scientists could be lost, weakening future discovery. These setbacks are not easily reversible and threaten both America's global leadership in biomedical innovation and the health of millions now and in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Unger JM et al. Population, Clinical, and Scientific Impact of National Cancer Institute's National Clinical Trials Network Treatment Studies. J Clin Oncol. 2023 Apr 10;41(11):2020-2028. <https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.22.01826>

<sup>2</sup> United for Medical Research. NIH's Role in Sustaining the U.S. Economy: FY2024 Update. March 2025. [https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/\\_UMR\\_NIH-Role-in-Sustaining-US-Economy-FY2024-2025-Update.pdf](https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/_UMR_NIH-Role-in-Sustaining-US-Economy-FY2024-2025-Update.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Miller, Kimberly D., Arif S. Kamal, A. Blythe Ryerson, et al. "Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Statistics, 2024." CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians 74, no. 3 (2024): 170-195. <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.21731>

# Increase National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute Funding in FY2026

*Cancer Research Delivers Breakthroughs & Hope*



Increased and sustained investment at NIH and NCI in the fight against cancer year over year has been key to reducing the nation's cancer mortality rate by 34% since 1991, and will bring us closer to ending cancer as we know it, for everyone.

## We can't afford to lose momentum.

**2 Million+**  
new cancer cases  
projected in 2025  
for the 1st time  
ever

**618,120**  
estimated deaths  
due to cancer in  
2025

  
Colorectal cancer  
diagnoses among  
people younger than  
55

**4**  
screenable cancers  
- breast, prostate,  
colorectal, and  
melanoma- on the  
rise

**18 Million+**  
cancer survivors in  
the U.S.

### NIH and NCI Funding Drive U.S. Economic Growth

In fiscal year 2024, NIH generated

Investment fuels the  
U.S. economy and  
benefits every state  
and D.C.



**\$94.58 Billion**  
in new economic  
activity nationwide

#### Return on Investment

**\$1** in NIH funded research

=

**\$ 2.56** in economic activity

supported

**407,782**  
jobs

and

**64,359**  
research grants

### Demand for NCI Research

The growth of NCI R01  
research grant applications  
over the last 10 years is  
almost

**3x**

that of the rest of  
NIH combined

**6 out of 7**

researcher-initiated  
proposals go **unfunded**  
every year **NCI HAS**

**13%**

**LESS buying power** than  
20 years ago

## Impact of Underinvestment

- ⚠️ Decline in applications funded
- ⚠️ Fewer opportunities for the next generation of researchers
- ⚠️ Reduced role of U.S. as the global leader in biomedical research
- ⚠️ Slower pace of breakthroughs in cancer prevention, screening, and treatment

## FY 2026 NCI Scientific Opportunities

- ➡ Improving Patients' Lives Through Symptom Science Research
- ➡ Revolutionizing Cancer Clinical Trials
- ➡ Clarifying the Impact of the Environment on Cancer Risk
- ➡ Harnessing the Power of Cancer Data
- ➡ Unraveling the Complexity of Cancer Metastasis

## Recent NCI Milestones

- ✓ **First FDA-approved Treatment**  
*advanced cases of alveolar soft part sarcoma*
- ✓ **Development of Drug Delivery Technology**  
*protecting drugs from the outside environment and guiding them directly to the target cancer cells*
- ✓ **Overcoming Treatment Resistance**  
*identification of a drug that could be beneficial for ovarian cancer patients whose cancer has grown after treatment*
- ✓ **Predicting Treatment Response**  
*identification of gene signatures associated with mesothelioma prognosis to help determine response to therapy*

## ACS CAN urges Congress to provide:

To ensure that the research being supported today yields the cancer treatments of tomorrow, Congress must sustain and expand the support it is currently providing.

**NIH**  
**\$51.3 Billion**

**NCI**  
**\$7.93 Billion**

[1] American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts and Figures 2025. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2025.

[2] United For Medical Research. 2025 NIH's Role in Sustaining the U.S. Economy. from: [https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/UMR\\_NIH-Role-in-Sustaining-US-Economy-FY2024-2025-Update.pdf](https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/UMR_NIH-Role-in-Sustaining-US-Economy-FY2024-2025-Update.pdf)

[3] National Cancer Institute: Annual Plan & Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2025. Retrieved on April 11, 2024, from: <https://www.cancer.gov/research/annual-plan/2024-annual-plan-budget-proposal-aag.pdf>

[4] CCR Milestones: Annual Highlights 2024. Retrieved on April 11, 2024, from: <https://ccr.cancer.gov/news/milestones-2024/flippingbook>



# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Evergreen email to lawmakers



Dear Senator/Representative [X]:

I am writing today as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) and concerned constituent over the current status of funding cancer research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). I am also concerned about funding for the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

In 2025, over 2 million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer, and more than 18 million Americans have been diagnosed at some point in their lives. Today, 1 in 3 people can expect to hear the words "you have cancer" at some point in their lifetime. For me, the connection to cancer is [fill in personal cancer story].

Cancer has touched all of us in one way or another, and for years there has been a bipartisan commitment to reliable funding for our premiere researchers and their institutions. But the current talk of cutting funding for life-saving cancer research is quite troubling. These cuts will have life-threatening consequences. Fewer people will have access to clinical trials; researchers on the cusp of new discoveries will be forced to shut off the lights; hope will be lost.

U.S. Biomedical research is the envy of the world, thanks to the sustained federal investments in research funding. Again, I thank you and your colleagues in Congress for past bipartisan support toward that goal. However, I am concerned about recent actions that are leading to the erosion of cancer research and America's role as the leader in biomedical innovation. The past few months have seen disruptions and uncertainty in the biomedical ecosystem that could halt long-standing progress. NIH grant funding was temporarily paused, the rate of new grants has dramatically slowed, researchers have had to put planned clinical trials on hold, a critical mass of NIH staff has been fired, and the Administration's budget proposal for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 offers deep cuts to NIH by \$18 billion. These recent actions worry me as a constituent and [cancer survivor, patient, caregiver]. And I hope, as my voice in Congress, you will stand up for continued progress in the fight against cancer. I urge you to sustain and increase the pace of discovery through robust enhanced NCI funding and ensure that progress for cancer cures continues. I request you support the highest possible funding for cancer research and prevention in the FY26 bill that includes:

- \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health
- \$7.93 billion for the National Cancer Institute
- \$1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)
- \$472.4 million for the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Division of Cancer Prevention & Control

Thank you again for your leadership in Congress. I look forward to continuing the conversation as the FY26 appropriations process unfolds.

Sincerely,

Volunteer Name  
Address  
Phone



# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Meeting script



### **Opening the Meeting:**

First, I want to thank you for this opportunity to meet with you to share the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's (ACS CAN) legislative priorities to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.

ACS CAN is quite concerned with the recent actions taken that undermine cancer research. Cancer cures are in jeopardy due to cuts in research funding, staff reductions and policy shifts at the NIH and NCI. The long-standing, broad, bipartisan consensus of support enjoyed by America's leading research institutions is under threat, putting cancer cures and America's leadership in cancer innovation at risk. Cancer patients can't wait for clinical trials or advances in drug development. Delays in innovation across the cancer continuum – from screening and early detection to treatment and cures – will cost lives. Cuts have consequences, and I am not OK with those consequences.

**Our Ask: Support the highest possible funding for cancer research & prevention programs in the FY 26 Labor-HHS funding bill.**

Specifically:

- \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including \$7.934 billion for cancer research at the National Cancer Institute (NCI); additionally,
- \$1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Project Agency for Health (ARPA-H); and
- \$472.4 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) cancer programs.

### **Hook:**

Now, we'd like to introduce ourselves. [Have everyone briefly state their name, where they live.]

### **Line:**

Share your cancer story and how it relates to the asks. Whether it be a cancer treatment, breakthrough, family history, or cancer screening story, share how has cancer touched your life and connect it to why it is important to prioritize cancer research and prevention funding at NIH, NCI, or CDC at this moment in time. They don't need to hear a lot of statistics from you, so just memorize one fact that you think will be persuasive, and make sure to tie it to your experiences.

Weave in some talking points from the messaging and talking points page.

(continue to next page)

# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Meeting script



### **Sinker:**

To summarize, we are asking you to: Support the highest possible funding for cancer research and prevention programs with **\$51.3 billion** for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), **\$7.934 billion** for cancer research at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), **\$1.5 billion** for Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), **\$472.4 million** for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) cancer prevention programs).

Can we count on your support?

### **Ending the Meeting**

Remember to end with a thank you.

- Thank the member or staffer for their time.
- Give the member or staffer the leave behind folder with the federal agenda and fact sheets.
- Let them know you will follow up.
- Ask for a photo.

### **Report Back:**

Be sure to fill out the report back form at [www.fightcancer.org/reportback](http://www.fightcancer.org/reportback). Share any intel you learned about the member's connection to cancer and support on ACS CAN's legislative priorities.

### **Post on Social Media:**

- .[insert lawmaker handle], thank you for meeting with [insert ACS CAN state handle] cancer advocates to talk about protecting cancer cures through funding #CancerResearch. @ACSCAN [optional: include photo]
- Great meeting with [insert lawmaker handle] today about @ACSCAN's legislative priorities to #ProtectCancerCures. We look forward to your support to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. [insert ACS CAN state handle] [optional: include photo]
- .[insert lawmaker handle], thank you for meeting with [insert ACS CAN state handle] cancer advocates today. Let's work together to make #CancerResearch a priority in FY26. @ACSCAN #ProtectCancerCures

# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Phone Script



### Cuts Have Consequences

#### Congress: Protect Cancer Cures

The threats to the public investment in cancer research and timely access to health care could have wide-scale impact and halt years of progress. Future cancer cures are in jeopardy due to cuts in research funding, staff reductions and policy shifts at the NIH and NCI. The long-standing, broad consensus of support enjoyed by America's premiere research institutions is under threat, putting cancer cures and America's leadership in cancer innovation at risk. Cancer patients can't wait for other countries to conduct needed clinical trials or drive advances in drug development. They need them today and they need them here in the U.S. Delays in innovation across the cancer continuum – from screening and early detection to treatment and cures – will cost lives. Progress in the fight against cancer is at risk without reliable, sustained funding for these vital programs. Your voice can make a difference.

Take one minute to call your U.S. House Representative and U.S. Senator to ask them to support the highest possible funding for cancer research at the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute.

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Call your lawmakers today!

1. Call 202-224-3121 or text funding to 73508 to be connected to your lawmakers office;
2. Let the switchboard know which office you would like to speak with;
3. When the staff member answers, follow script (or leave a message if you get a voicemail);
4. Stay on the line to make another call.

### Recommended Talking Points

My name is [your name]. My address is [your street address, so the office can verify you are a constituent].

As a constituent and volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, I'm calling to ask [lawmaker name] stand up for continued progress in the fight against cancer. As Congress works on funding levels for Fiscal Year 2026, I urge you to support the highest possible funding for cancer research at NIH and NCI (and CDC?), and reject the massive cuts that have been proposed by the administration. The rest of the world is not backing down from battling cancer and we shouldn't either. Thank you.

# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Sample town hall questions



***It is important to participate in congressional town halls, either in person or virtually, to ask members publicly about our campaign priorities. Feel free to choose the question best suited to your story or relationship with your member.***

- Cuts have consequences, and cuts to funding for cancer research and prevention programs mean fewer clinical trials, fewer grants to discover new treatment options and less access to lifesaving early detection services. What will you do to ensure that proposed cuts by the administration to vital cancer research and prevention programs are rejected when Congress begins negotiating the Fiscal Year 2026 budget?
- Cancer patients and their families depend on lifesaving cancer research. Every new breakthrough in cancer treatment and prevention has started with federal funding. Any cuts to cancer research mean slowing progress, delaying new treatments, and putting lives at risk. Cuts to research funding, reductions in key staff, and spending freezes all jeopardize progress in the fight against cancer and undermine decades of momentum. How will you protect vital funding for cancer research and prevention programs in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget?
- The CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program has long provided women with cervical and breast cancer screening and follow-up care. This is a gold standard program utilizing proven prevention and early detection programs to increase the number of women who are diagnosed with cancer who can go on to live healthy, happy, and productive lives. Will you commit to rejecting any proposed cuts to this critical CDC program and cosponsor the SCREENS for Cancer Act?

# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Email to engage volunteers/partners



Dear Friends & Neighbors,

As you may know, I am a proud volunteer advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, or ACS CAN. In 2025, over 2 million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer. Today, 1 in 3 people can expect to hear the words “you have cancer” at some point in their lifetime. For me, cancer is personal because [fill in personal cancer story].

Cancer has touched all of us in one way or another, and for years there has been a bipartisan commitment to reliable funding for our premiere researchers and their institutions. But the current talk in Washington, DC of cutting funding for life saving cancer research is quite troubling. These cuts will have life-threatening consequences. Fewer people will have access to clinical trials; researchers on the cusp of new discoveries will be forced to shut off the lights; hope will be lost. I am writing to enlist your help to support efforts to amplify ACS CAN’s efforts to protect cancer research and prevention efforts across the country.

Here’s how you can engage:

- Join me in volunteering with ACS CAN by signing the petition and get involved Sign the petition to tell Congress cancer research funding isn't optional – it's essential. From here you will be signed up to receive vital information in real time.
- Amplify ACS CAN’s work on social media.
  - <https://www.facebook.com/ACSCAN>
  - <https://twitter.com/acscan>
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/acscan>
- Donate to our cause for ACS CAN to do even more. By contributing to ACS CAN, you can tell Congress research funding isn't optional - it's essential

Reach out to me at [fill in contact details] for more information. Together we can win this fight.



**TAKE ACTION**

# Sign the petition.

Cuts have consequences. Cancer patients and their families depend on lifesaving cancer research. Every new breakthrough in cancer treatment and prevention starts with federal funding. Cuts to cancer research mean slowing progress, delaying new treatments, and putting lives at risk.

Congress: Protect Cancer Cures!



**YOU CAN TAKE ACTION TODAY AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY  
MEMBERS TO DO THE SAME.**

# Protecting Cancer Cures

## Template social media



### To engage fellow volunteers/partners:

- Cancer patients depend on lifesaving #CancerResearch. Every breakthrough in cancer treatment & prevention starts with federal funding. Cuts mean slower progress, delayed treatments & more lives at risk.
- Join me & tell Congress that #CutsHaveConsequences: <https://go.fightcancer.org/3SGfyJU>
- In 2025, over 2 million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer. For me, cancer is personal because [insert personal cancer story]. Please join me & urge Congress to #ProtectCancerCures: <https://go.fightcancer.org/3SGfyJU>
- Future cancer cures are at risk due to drastic proposed cuts to cancer research & prevention funding. #CutsHaveConsequences. And those consequences are life-threatening for patients who could be waiting for the next treatment breakthrough. Take action now: <https://go.fightcancer.org/3SGfyJU>

### To engage lawmakers:

- As a cancer advocate for @ACSCAN, I'm urging [insert lawmaker handle] to #ProtectCancerCures. We need you to support the highest possible funding for cancer research & reject cuts. We can't back down from the fight against cancer. #CutsHaveConsequences
- [insert lawmaker handle], will you support the highest possible funding for cancer research & prevention? [State-ians], including cancer patients and their families, are counting on you to #ProtectCancerCures.
- Cancer affects people across the country & political spectrum. [insert lawmaker handle], this is not a partisan issue. Everyone has a shared responsibility as we battle this disease. Will you do your part to #ProtectCancerCures in the FY26 budget bill? #CutsHaveConsequences

*See page 10 for social media copy to post after meeting with your lawmakers.*

### To encourage donations:

- Cuts to #CancerResearch mean slowing progress, delaying new treatments & putting lives at risk. By contributing to ACS CAN, you can tell Congress that cancer research & prevention funding isn't optional—it's essential. #ProtectCancerCures <https://go.fightcancer.org/4dpLdsS>
- Cuts to #CancerResearch funding, reductions in key staff & spending freezes all jeopardize progress in the fight against cancer. @ACSCAN is working every day to oppose these cuts. Donate now to help power this vital advocacy! <https://go.fightcancer.org/4dpLdsS>