

California

December 2025 Quarterly Newsletter



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

Thank you Jamie Escoto, our fearless State Lead Ambassador for the last 2 years, for leading us, cheering us on, and encouraging us to step out of our comfort zone. We heard you, Jamie, and a little Papa Jimmy live in all of our stories. You will be missed.

and A BIG WELCOME!

Enter, Laura LaRose! You are the perfect Lead. Your personal touches we've seen over the years have not gone unnoticed. The baton continues on its journey and we can't wait to be a part of your leadership!

As we turn the page to a new year, I want to begin by acknowledging just how hard 2025 has been. From the devastating fires in Los Angeles that forced us to reschedule our summit, to an administration that has made unprecedented cuts to health care and cancer research funding, this year has tested our resolve in ways few could have imagined. These challenges have been heavy—and real—but they have also revealed the **extraordinary strength** of this community.

Even in the darkest moments, working alongside our ACS CAN California advocates has given me hope and kept me going. Your determination, resilience, and unwavering commitment to a cancer-free future continue to inspire me. Despite the obstacles, we came together for a fantastic summit in Los Angeles, witnessed our incredible youth advocates not only author AB 703 but see it passed and signed into law, and helped secure remarkable bipartisan momentum for MCED—335 cosponsors and counting. These wins are powerful reminders that **progress is possible**, even in the toughest times.

As we head into the holiday season and look ahead to the new year, I am filled with gratitude and optimism. **Thank you for everything you do**, and for being such a source of inspiration and hope. I wish you and your loved ones a warm holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year. I can't wait to continue this work together and to see you all in Los Angeles for our February summit. Working with such an inspiring group of advocates truly fills my cup—and I've never been more hopeful about what we can accomplish together.

With love and gratitude,

Your Vice State Lead Ambassador, Laura LaRose

Key Dates

Saturday, Feb 28, 2026

California Ambassador Summit

Registration Link:

[ACS CAN 2026 California
Ambassador Summit - Sat, Feb
28, 2026](#)

Wednesday, April 28, 2026

California Cancer Action Date
(invitees stayed tuned)

USEFUL LINKS

2026 Call Calendar

- California Ambassador Hub
- National Volunteer Home Page
- CA Society of Emerging Leaders
- ** Volunteer Report Back Form
 - Please report all actions taken!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Are you participating in an event and looking for resources to engage your local community? Well, look no further! [The Grassroot Team has prepared a link to campaign resources on our California Ambassador Hub!](#) You can go here to find petitions and fact sheets on relevant and timely campaigns.

Send your feedback or ideas for the newsletter to
Stephanie Gordon-Rivera
stephanie.grivera@gmail.com or Tina Tankka
tinykung74@gmail.com

HOPE WALL SANTANA ROW, SAN JOSE

That's a good looking group of faces. Lots of onlookers, lots of inquiries. Just one of many Hope Walls around the nation.



CANCER VOTES IS BACK IN 2026

It's mid-term season and candidates are ramping up campaign efforts and that means we ask them to pledge to make cancer a priority by signing the Cancer Promise.

ACSCAN is looking for volunteer leaders to become Cancer Votes Regional Ambassadors to head communication and engagement with Cancer Votes volunteers in their region.

Resources : Learn more about Cancer Votes and the leadership role [here](#). [Apply](#).

**A VERY PERSONAL STORY BEHIND
CALIFORNIA'S PEDIATRIC CANCER RESEARCH VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION
FUND, AB 703**

Most notable this year was AB 703, spearheaded by Misha Mehta and family, who lost their son at the age of 6 to an aggressive brain cancer, diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma.

"Losing my son Neev broke me in ways words cannot hold. Childhood cancer took the future I imagined but love does not end with loss; it transforms. I choose to carry my grief forward as purpose, turning pain into action and heartbreak into hope, so that Neev's life continues to matter through every child I fight for and every family we strive to spare from this loss."



Let's complete the circle of advocacy, passage and action. Show this passage was worthy by clicking the donate tab this next tax year and all years moving ahead. Our most important people are those mighty little ones who promise to know more than we ever will. As a remembrance, donate for Neev and all the other little warriors past, present and future.

November was Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Misconception - Lung cancer is a smoking disease. NO!

Cigarette smoking is on the decline but lung cancer is on the rise! Risk factors also include secondhand smoke, radon, asbestos, and family history. Screening remains subpar, especially in our Southern states.

Health inequity is a live talking point!

For strong presentations to your lawmakers learn more at [US Tobacco Atlas](#).

***Kick it California** (KIC) offers safe and affirming coaching for all Californians who want to quit commercial tobacco and nicotine. For more information, visit kickitca.org



New Ambassadors

Let's give a warm welcome to our new volunteers!

- Adair Minihan CD: 36
- Amish Bhatnagar CD: 12
- Arshdeep Villa CD: 19
- Aryan Kumar CD: 14
- Camila Hashemi CD: 48
- Candy Pahua CD: 1
- Charlotte Liang CD: 15
- Emma Wong CD: 20
- Felecia Leung CD: 14
- Hallie Hawk CD: 40
- Jacklyn Vu CD: 45
- Jasmeen Singh CD: 26
- Johnny Borda CD: 36
- Julian Gonzalez CD: 35
- Justin Classen CD: 5
- Kristie Ma CD: 31
- Mansi Shah CD: 4
- Miono Quoit-Minematsu CD: 40
- Mona Kurra CD: 38
- Neha Kahlon CD: 8
- Qananii Muhammad CD: 34
- Sahana Kaza CD: 17
- Saina Sangle CD: 17
- Sandhya Radhakrishnan CD: 28
- Saya James Hernandez CD: 31
- Vasilya Rajkumar CD: 10
- Zayaan Saqib Jamal CD: 40

More California Victories

Newsom announced \$145.5 mil in funds to organizations that support access to local, specialized healthcare services that help everyone and that everyone can access.

Also signed was **AB 1181** authored by Assemblymember Matt Haney (CA Assembly District 17). This legislation ensures that the protective gear our firefighters wear doesn't contain hazardous, cancer-causing chemicals.

Led by UCLA and UC Davis, along with the **California Firefighter Cancer Research Study**, a major research effort, has been funded to investigate how occupational exposures among firefighters can cause cancer risk. We join Florida, Massachusetts, Arizona, North Carolina and Texas in contributing to the **National Firefighter Registry (NFR) for Cancer**

AB 573 (Rogers) CDTFA Tobacco Retail License Fee, a bill to increase the tobacco retail licensing fee to expand reach of annual inspections and increase capacity to seize illegal flavored tobacco from stores **passed!**

For the first time ever ACSCAN volunteers collectively in 2025 raised \$1.1 mil crossing the million \$ threshold. BUT.....

FEDERALLY THE FIGHT IS THE BIGGEST!!

The **AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** is on the chopping block. Nearly 3 in 4 cancer patients will lose access to lifesaving care if these tax credits are not extended. Keep calling and writing to your Congressperson and remind them loud voices will stay loud regarding **ACA**.

FACTS ON CANCER RESEARCH FUNDING - For all inquisitive minds, drum roll please!

#1 - The American Cancer Society is the largest non-government, non-profit funder of cancer research in the United States, which includes supporting the work of 53 researchers who have gone on to win the Nobel Prize for their work. California and Massachusetts lead the herd in the number of current research and training grants received. BUT WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE. USE THAT IN OUR HOOK, LINE AND SINKER!

#2 - Cuts to research - research cannot resume where it was left off!!
When funding stops scientists are let go, talent and data are lost. IF funding comes back, starting all over again is costly. Continuity is essential!

#3 - Cuts will relinquish our tenuous #1 position as a powerhouse in cancer research, drug discovery, treatment access and innovation.

****Remind them also that we're the only high-income nation in the world that does not guarantee health care to all our people!!****

Another Personal Story

Tom Tankka, Tina's husband, diagnosed with AL Amyloidosis, 10 years ago, would not be alive today if his illness was 5 years earlier. It's unfathomable to think if anyone diagnosed 5 years from today would not have a chance because support and continued research died. Tom is alive today most definitely due to funding and tertiary funding from the various resources that benefitted from ACS grants.

Stay on the horn and don't let up!

State Priorities

AB957 Tobacco Free Pharmacies is still in progress and will be revisited in 2026.

The **2026 Federal Priorities One-Pager** is now available on the right column of the California Ambassador Hub! [Go check it out!](#)

Where is Cancer today?

Despite the challenges we hear that are going on at the NIH and NCI research is still making tremendous progress. **Liquid biopsies**, **AI in research**, the **Childhood Cancer Data Initiative (CCDI)** are all part of our work that makes advocacy exciting and rewarding. Be assured our boots (and blue shirts!) on the ground make a ginormous impact to these realities. Ambassadors, you are indispensable!

