

California

JULY 2026 Quarterly Newsletter



"Ambassadors, you are the wings beneath advocacy"

Summer is officially here—and if you're anything like me, you're ready to trade a little bit of that primary election stress for some sunshine, fresh air, and a chance to recharge. It's been a busy season, so consider this your friendly reminder to take a breath and find some joy.

The start of summer gives us a few meaningful reasons to celebrate. June is Pride Month—a time to honor love, resilience, and the incredible diversity that makes our communities stronger. It's also Cancer Survivors Month, a powerful reminder of why we do this work and a time to celebrate the strength and stories of survivors everywhere.

And while summer is a time to relax, it's also a time to get inspired. Lights of Hope season is upon us! For me Lights of Hope helps bring everything into focus—why we advocate, who we're fighting for, and the impact we can make together. I'm looking forward to seeing pictures of all the California displays and hearing about the creative ways people are fundraising.

So as we ease into summer, let's try to hold onto a little balance—stay engaged, keep the momentum going, but don't forget to make space for fun, rest, and the things that refill your cup (luckily for me that includes this work with all of you)! I want to see everyone recharged and ready for the work we have ahead of us this fall.

Thanks for all that you do—now go enjoy a little summer. You've earned it!

With love and gratitude,

Laura LaRose
California State Lead Ambassador

****COMMUNICATIONS NOTE****

Aiming for efficiency, we send only one email on any given day and will not send a state communication the same day as a national email.



AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR NEW VICE LEAD!

Hello Fellow Ambassadors:

I got involved with ACS CAN after sharing my story and the importance of early detection at a Making Strides Walk. There I met ACS CAN volunteer Idonia Ramos. She was so passionate and shared all of the great things that she and her fellow volunteers were doing in LA. She told me how easy it was to get involved and encouraged me to check out the website to learn more. I've been involved ever since.

I was diagnosed with hormone sensitive breast cancer at 35 after breastfeeding, and less than five years later I had a recurrence in the same place. In both situations early detection saved my life. So, I've become passionate about sharing the importance of early detection, cancer education, and programs that help improve outcomes.

I'm so thankful for this phase of survivorship and the ability to advocate to help others. ACS-CAN is amazing because it makes this work so easy to do.

I'm so excited to have the opportunity to serve alongside the amazing Laura and all of you dedicated Ambassadors. It's such a great honor and especially great to be doing this in California!!

My hope is that I can support the community we have all built where anyone can make an immediate and tangible contribution to the quest to end cancer (as we know it) but also for good through policy changes, community, and civic engagement.

Warmly,
Teyonna Bowman

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



Cancer Votes is a non-partisan volunteer program dedicated to encouraging candidates and legislators to sign the **Cancer Promise**, committing to make cancer prevention, research funding, and access to healthcare top priorities.

Growing Momentum Nationwide

Cancer Votes continues to gain momentum as volunteers and candidates across the country engage in efforts to elevate cancer as a key issue in the 2026 midterm elections. Building on early outreach and expanding volunteer activation, June has marked another month of significant growth and impact.

Candidate Support Continues to Increase

Candidates from both major political parties are responding positively to the Cancer Promise. To date, 26 candidates have signed on, demonstrating growing support for our legislative priorities, including:

- Increased investment in cancer research
- Access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare
- Expanded cancer prevention and early detection services

A special thank you to **Kay Coleman and Janice Montle** for securing the first California candidate to sign the Cancer Promise.

Get Involved

Stay informed and help advance our mission by:

- [Check out the Cancer Votes Volunteer Hub](#)
- Participating in candidate engagement opportunities and advocacy efforts

Together, we can ensure that cancer remains a visible and urgent issue during the 2026 election cycle.

STATE PRIORITIES FOR CANCER ACTION DAY

ASPIRE ASIAN AMERICAN COHORT STUDY

- **The ASPIRE Cohort** is a research study that will follow 20,000+ Asian Americans over time to study health and cancer.
- ASPIRE is funded by the National Cancer Institute. It is led by researchers at UCSF, UC Irvine, UC Davis, UCLA, Cedars-Sinai, Temple University, Jefferson University, and University of Hawaii.
- Find promotional materials including flyers, postcards, and social media content and images to share in the [ASPIRE Toolkit](#)

LIGHTS OF HOPE

General Resources

**Calling all California
ambassadors!**



If you haven't yet created your donor hub, waste no time. The ask is the same repeated way we ask our legislators for their ear. Your donors want to donate. All they need is your link. Don't wait for them to say "Where have you been??"

STRAIGHT OUT OF THE GATES

SEL NEWS:

An update from Executive Director of SEL, Kaitlyn Lee

The SEL recently hosted three lawmaker Q&As— one with Senator Scott Wiener, one with Assemblymember Alex Lee, and one with Assemblymember Diane Papan. The Q&A with Asm Lee was entitled "Advancing Youth Engagement in Public Policy" and the Q&A with Senator Wiener was entitled "Advancing Cancer Care and Research in California." Our latest Q&A with Asm Papan was titled "From City Hall to the California Legislature: Exploring Pathways in Policy & Public Service." For a complete description of each event, posted is a recap on [our LinkedIn](#) for specifics.

The SEL worked with the KiraKira Institute to host an in-person version of our [Hack4Hope cancer policy hackathon, which was part of LA Against Cancer.](#)

In addition to a lot of in-person tablings for the Childhood Cancer Research Fund, as well as some tabling for the lung cancer screening bill



KILEY MURAKAMI'S STORY



In October 2020, my dad began experiencing severe back pain. Two months later, an MRI revealed he had a spinal fracture caused by a large tumor sitting on his spine. After further testing, I received a call from my dad saying, “I have cancer.” That phone call will forever remain a defining moment of my life. Physicians officially diagnosed him with adrenal cancer, a rare and aggressive cancer.

Class moved fully online during my senior year of high school, allowing me to spend every day beside my dad to comfort and assist him during this difficult time. When I left for UC Berkeley in August 2021, my mom carried the unimaginable responsibility of caring for him while working full time. No one deserves more credit than she does, as she stood beside him through every single appointment and hospital stay until the very end.

When I was in Berkeley, I made a point to call my dad or mom each night to check in on their well-being. Every break from school meant returning home to help manage daily tasks and simply be there with my parents. Through this experience, I quickly learned how deeply cancer can take a toll on entire families.

Extraordinary physicians and nurses, through their compassion, gave our family hope. He passed away in June 2023 after a courageous 2.5-year battle. But his strength continues to inspire my dream of becoming a physician.

Through the ACS CAN California Society of Emerging Leaders (SEL), I found a community right after graduating college that I never knew I needed. This is a group of passionate young advocates who gave me newfound purpose and reminded me that none of us fights cancer alone.

Preparing for the next chapter of my journey, I hope to launch a project dedicated to supporting young caregivers, creating a space where they can find community and resources to reassure them that they are never alone.

By sharing this story, I hope to help even one cancer patient feel seen or inspire one person to become an advocate, just as my dad would have wanted.



STANFORD'S \$10MIL DONATION TO THE BUILDING OF A HOPE LODGE

The talk of lodging near the world renowned Stanford Medicine Cancer Center is finally becoming a reality. Stanford has partnered with The American Cancer Society to bring lodging to cancer patients and their caretakers to the Bay Area.



DID YOU KNOW?

[**The American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant Program**](#) Qualifying associate or full professors can apply. Grants last 4 years and are eligible for a 4 year renewal. The monies applied to these programs are the seedlings that spread over a broad spectrum of preliminary research. If promising, these nascent programs can then move on to secure the larger NIH or NCI backed grants.

[**WHY 2026 MATTERS FOR GENE THERAPY - How Gene Therapy Can Cure or Treat Diseases | FDA**](#)

In 1969 Drs. Frederick Li and Joseph Fraumeni at the NCI identified cancer clusters in related families throughout the US. Thus began their 20 year journey unlocking the beginnings of investigative gene research and turning cancer from a misdemeanor to an inheritable liability. Today customizable gene therapy is one of the holy grails in cancer treatments. Imagine a world when our children will look at chemo and radiation therapies as ones for the archives. Read the above link and see what the FDA has to say.

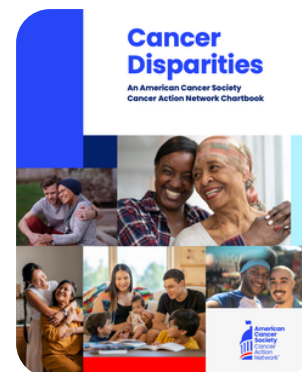
[**THE NEW FRONTIER IN CANCER RESEARCH IS IN SPACE.**](#)

In the microgravity of space, tumors can triple in size in just 10 days, where some of these tumors, on terra firma, take 10 years to grow to the same size. This discovery could be a boon for cancer research.

[**MORE THAN HALF OF LUNG CANCER GOES UNTREATED.**](#) Improvements in lung cancer treatments have increased. But a study finds that half the patients do not receive treatment due to racism, socioeconomic barriers, social stigma related to shame (they brought it upon themselves b/c they smoked), and a basic feeling of hopelessness. Screening is underutilized largely because the criteria for those eligible falls under a narrow spectrum of requirements. The conundrum is how to get the word out, remove stigmas and insurance prerequisites.

[**CANCER DISPARITIES: An ACS CAN Chartbook, prepared 2026.**](#)

Cancer affects every community, every socioeconomic group, every ethnic group differently. Read the newly published study, by ACS CAN. The inequality is eye opening. ACS CAN's advocates are bringing this issue to policy makers and making it their issue.



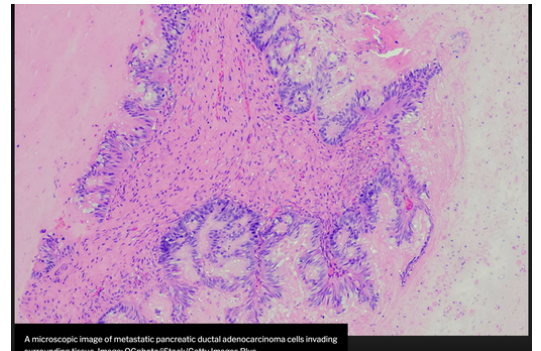
PRESS RELEASE

[American Cancer Society recommends blood test for early colorectal cancer detection](#)

Colorectal cancer is highly preventable, as it is highly treatable if found early. Guidelines are for a new blood based screening test given in the doctor's office, as well as a new updated at-home-screening test that will detect hidden blood and molecular markers in the stool.

[Pancreatic cancer pill doubles survival](#)

Pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma is the most common and aggressive cancer related to the pancreas. A new drug, Daraxonisab, in stage 3 of clinical trials, has been shown to extend life expectancies from 7 months on chemo, to 13 months. Other research in pancreatic cancers include studies of the micro environment of the tumors.



[Genomic test could spare many breast cancer patients from getting chemo therapy](#)

A genomic test has been developed to determine whether or not a woman needs to undergo further chemotherapy after a tumor has been removed. Those who test favorably can safely proceed to hormone therapy alone.

CALIFORNIA UPDATES

[Senate Bill 1309](#) (The Stop Cancer Early Act) - passed in Senate, on to Assembly

AB 1570 (Diagnostic Imaging) - being introduced in Assembly

SB 306 (Prior Authorization Reform) - ENACTED!

SB 987 (California Cancer Care Equity Act) - being introduced in Senate

AB 957 (Cigarette and tobacco products: retail sale: pharmacies) - did not move forward.

California Cancer Registry Protection - on going support



FEDERAL NEWS

[ACS CAN Secures Landmark Federal Wins for Cancer Patients in the FY26 Funding & Health Package](#) -

We were able to overcome the enormous challenges during this FY26. Despite earlier uncertainties across health and the biomedical landscape, the final FY26 package increased or maintained funding across cancer priorities.

[What's in the Package](#)

- Research & 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. This allows for continued investment in new cancer studies and clinical trials.

[Progress for Childhood Cancer](#)

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

[MULTI CANCER EARLY DETECTION](#) - A Breakthrough for Early Detection, 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. 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.

MCED is a direct result of your voices, relentless advocacy, passion and truth:

- 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

Continued work.....

The House Energy & Commerce Committee unanimously passed the Breast Cancer Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act (EARLY) Reauthorization (H.R. 4541 / S. 2339) by a vote of 48–0. The EARLY Act is a critical federal initiative focused on breast cancer education, early detection and prevention efforts for young women. ACS CAN has endorsed the bill and sent a message to all Committee members in support of the legislation.

Sens. Tim Scott (R-SC) and Mark Warner (D-VA) [introduced](#) the Clinical Trial Modernization Act (H.R. 3521 / S. 4440), the Senate companion to a House bill that was introduced by Reps. Raul Ruiz (D-CA) and August Pfluger (R-TX) last year. This ACS CAN priority legislation would increase access for underserved populations, including rural populations, to clinical trials for cancer and other life-threatening diseases by reducing bureaucratic hurdles, helping to maintain the United States' leadership in medical innovation. We look forward to advocating for the passage of this bill at our 2026 Leadership Summit and Lobby Day.

The 2026 spending bill included several landmark provisions, especially in pediatrics. These landmarks are victories, but uncertainty still lies ahead, which underscores the importance of our advocacy voice. The heritage of the American Cancer Society carries enormous weight. The Cancer Action Network delivers that heritage to Congress because our voices carry weight.

NEW AMBASSADORS

Our national volunteer network has expanded to **564 volunteers across 48 states (including 63 in California)**, reflecting growing energy and reach nationwide. Volunteers are actively showing up, having attended 10 candidate events so far, to build relationships with candidates and elevate cancer issues as a top priority.

USEFUL LINKS

- An archive of all newsletters can be found on the [ACS CAN California Hub](#)
- California Ambassador Hub - link for [All Things Tobacco](#)
- ACS CAN Society of Emerging Leaders (SEL) - [join](#)
- Affinity Groups - [join](#)
- Lights of Hope - [register and learn](#)