

All Leads Call 2.3.26- Notes

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks — Rachael Eerdmans

- Welcomed all participants and highlighted that this is the first All Leads call to include a Volunteer Spotlight Sneak Peek. Watch social media later this month!
- **February Volunteer Spotlights announced:**
 - *Felicia Brown* — Cancer survivor, strong advocate with “purpose and heart.”
 - *Bonita Sherman* — Breast cancer survivor, Virginia ACT Lead, Black Volunteer Caucus member, Virginia Cancer Action Day team captain.

2. National Update — Lisa Lacasse, President, ACS CAN

- Historic victory: Passage and signing of the year-long appropriations bill *and* long-awaited Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCED) legislation, after four Congresses of work.
- Reflected on:
 - The proposed 40% cut to NIH/NCI in 2025.
 - The extraordinary advocacy, persistence, and volunteer power that reversed that trajectory.
- Strong message of gratitude:
“This organization is about every single one of you.”

3. Campaign Overview — Jeff Martin

- Reviewed the full year of advocacy work responding to 2025 funding threats.
- Highlights included:
 - Town halls, state fairs, football game tailgates.
 - Lobby Day.
 - Bipartisan Capitol Hill rally.
 - Extensive follow-up actions: nationwide HOPE events, calls, emails.

4. Cancer Votes 2026 — Greta Johnson

2025 Program Results

- 567 volunteers across 48 states + DC + PR.
- 93 candidates signed the Cancer Promise (over half solicited by volunteers).
- 42,000+ action takers, 30 campaign staff briefings, 16 candidate coffee chats

2026 Program Priorities

- Increase ACS CAN's influence by building relationships with candidates.
- Recruit champions, get candidates on record, and strengthen accountability post-election.
- Engage voters through:
 - Bird-dogging (attending events to ask cancer-related questions).
 - Social media engagement.
 - Media outreach (LTEs, interviews).
 - Expanded voter registration and Get Out the Vote work.

New Enhancements

- TurboVote replaces Vote.org — enables ballot previews, candidate contact info, and social links.
- Brand-new swag: T-shirt, tote, sticker (“Your Vote Can Save Lives”).
- Additional incentives: water bottle and hat.
- To sign up: take the on-demand training → complete form at end.

5. Volunteer Spotlight — Heather Almager (Indiana ACT Lead, CD-1)

- Joined ACS CAN mid-2025 and immediately engaged at high levels (Leadership Summit, Cancer Action Day).
- Shared her deeply personal journey:
 - Breast cancer was discovered during fertility treatment at age 29.
 - Multiple surgeries, sepsis, heart valve damage, 6-month recovery.
 - Later complications leading to a hysterectomy and loss of family-building plans.
 - Ongoing \$75,000+ medical debt despite insurance.

- Highlighted the financial toxicity of cancer and how stories influence legislators.
- Reported real movement in Indiana:
 - Senate Bills 85 and 197 advancing to protect patients from predatory medical debt and wage garnishment.
- Encouraged volunteers to share their authentic stories—“legislators remember people, not statistics.”

6. Affinity Groups Update — Cody Wolf

2025 Highlights

- 377 members (15% growth).
- Representation from 45 states + DC, Puerto Rico, Guam.
- Affinity group volunteers raised \$175,000 for Lights of Hope (18% of total).
- Hosted virtual events, screenings, Pride engagements, cultural campaigns, and contributed dozens of stories for research advocacy.
- Co-led “Allyship Is a Verb” sessions (Top 4 of 16 at Leadership Summit).
- Supported national campaigns and Voices of Black Women work.

2026 Priorities

- Continue expanding membership and representation.
- Foster safe, identity-affirming community spaces.
- Strengthen leadership pipelines.
- Provide guidance on campaigns and authentic engagement strategies.
- Expand partnerships and trust-building opportunities.

New Interest Group (2025 Launch):

IMPACT — Interdisciplinary Medical Professionals and Cancer Researchers Together

- Focused on research funding threats and collective advocacy.
- Open for new members- Contact- leslie.ferreira@cancer.org

7. Volunteer Engagement Updates — Rachael Eerdmans

Welcome to New ACT Leads

- Encouraged new leads to introduce themselves in the chat; celebrated the growing team.

Health Equity Framework & Survey (coming late February)

- Organization building long-term approach for cancer health equity.
- Volunteer survey will:
 - Identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities.
 - Inform what volunteers need to confidently continue integrating equity into advocacy.
- Watch for the survey mid-February

Lights of Hope 2026

- New tools available now:
 - At-home event guide
 - Updated sponsorship packet
 - Updated resources and incentive details
- Donor Drive pages open Feb 25 for early planners.
- Major kickoff + extended training planned for May All Leads call.

8. Action Items

- Take the Cancer Votes on-demand training and officially sign up as a 2026 Cancer Votes volunteer. www.cancervotes.org/training
- Watch for the Health Equity Volunteer Survey later this month.
- Visit the Lights of Hope Resource Site and begin making sponsorship asks.
- Save the date: Next All Leads Call — May 12, 2026 (7:30 PM ET) featuring Lights of Hope Kickoff.