



# Introduction

The Prevent Cancer Foundation is the only nonprofit organization in the United States solely devoted to cancer prevention and early detection. This section provides information about the Foundation as well as data on cancer prevention and early detection and policy priorities which drive our advocacy efforts.

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# Prevent Cancer Foundation

The Prevent Cancer Foundation's mission is saving lives through cancer prevention and early detection. Since 1985, the Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has invested over \$138 million in support of cancer prevention research, education, outreach, and advocacy programs nationwide and has played a pivotal role in developing a body of knowledge that is the basis for important prevention and early detection strategies.

## The Prevent Cancer Foundation has spent the last three decades working to:

- Reduce the cancer mortality rate by focusing on funding prevention and early detection research, promoting individual healthy behaviors, and engaging in public policy discussions.
- Raise awareness of preventable cancers across all populations.
- Make prevention knowledge and early detection services more accessible for people in medically underserved communities.
- Collaborate with partners to maximize the effectiveness and reach of the prevention and early detection message and programs.
- Increase funding for cancer research and access to quality care for all patients.

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is the *only*  
U.S. nonprofit  
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# Toolkit

## Audience and Purpose

“Congress shall make no law respecting...  
the right of the people peaceably to assemble  
and to petition the government for a redress  
of grievances.”

-First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

**The Prevent Cancer Foundation wants to work with you because you are our strongest resource.**

Your voice is critically important and we can help you amplify it. Your experience, story, interests, and actions increase government funding and resources, strengthen health programs, and enhance awareness. We want to help you be your own best advocate, for yourself, your family, your community, and for the overall cause of cancer prevention and early detection.

The Prevent Cancer Foundation advocacy toolkit was created with a broad audience in mind. It provides basic, foundational information for individuals interested in advocating in support of cancer prevention research and policy issues. The purpose of this toolkit is to educate, engage, and empower you to make your voice heard with elected officials and decision makers. It primarily covers legislative and policy advocacy, but also discusses personal, community, and media advocacy.

“I am so proud to serve in a leadership position for the only organization in the country that solely focuses on cancer prevention and early detection and serves as a leading voice on Capitol Hill and throughout the nation. I look forward to seeing our advocacy progress in the next 30 years.”

SCOTT MCINTYRE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS (PWC),  
CHAIRMAN, PREVENT CANCER FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Background

Something is preventing prevention. Seven in ten deaths in the U.S. are related to chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S., responsible for an average of 1,575 deaths daily—equivalent to the loss of all passengers on three fully-loaded jumbo jets each and every day.

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, yet the World Health Organization (WHO) states that it is avoidable to a large extent. Across America, approximately 1.6 million people will receive a cancer diagnosis this year and more than half a million people will lose their lives to the disease. While survival rates have increased in recent years, cancer still ranks as the second most deadly disease in our nation. Continued improvement in survival rates will increasingly depend on better treatments, and importantly, better screening and prevention efforts.

Prevention is vital to the health and wellbeing of individuals and families in the United States and around the globe. It makes sense, but more important, it saves lives. Prevention is by far the most logical solution to better health outcomes and reduced health care spending. Lifestyle choices such as refraining from using tobacco products, maintaining a healthy weight, regularly exercising, eating a nutritious diet, practicing sun safety, receiving proper immunizations, practicing safe sex, and knowing family medical history can drastically improve health outcomes. Research shows that prevention efforts can save 4.5 million lives and almost \$600 billion over the next 25 years.

Approximately, two-thirds of Americans are obese or overweight and nearly 20 percent smoke tobacco products. Obesity costs the nation \$196 billion and tobacco use \$96 billion in direct health care costs each year. If we continue on this trajectory, by 2030 half of Americans will be obese. Current outcomes and projections are even more dire for people of color, those living in poverty, individuals with lower education levels, and the uninsured. Meanwhile, fewer than half of Americans receive recommended prevention and screening services.

We currently spend 75 percent of \$2.5 trillion annual U.S. health care dollars on treatment of chronic conditions. Although the U.S. spends far more on medical care than

**1.6 million people will receive a cancer diagnosis this year and more than half a million people will lose their lives to the disease.**

**Up to 60 percent of cancer cases and more than 50 percent of cancer deaths are preventable with the knowledge we have today.**



**Only three pennies of each national health care dollar spent goes towards prevention.**

any other industrialized nation, it ranks 26th among 36 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries in terms of life expectancy. As noted above, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns that chronic conditions are the nation's leading cause of death and disability, although many chronic diseases can be prevented.

Meanwhile, current expenditures on chronic disease prevention are low, with only three cents of each national health care dollar in the U.S. going towards prevention. A 2011 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, "For the Public's Health, Investing in America's Future," recommended at the time that Congress double the current federal appropriations level for public health.

Continuing to focus most of our efforts on diagnosis and treatment is unsustainable. We can no longer afford it—in terms of both cost, but more importantly in terms of lives lost. The prevention community, as a whole, must work cohesively to develop advocacy, policy, and regulatory approaches to best utilize scarce health care resources and promote and protect prevention strategies. Regardless of the chronic disease, the answer is the same: prevention.

**Research shows that prevention efforts can save 4.5 million lives and almost \$600 billion over the next 25 years.**

# Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Talking Points

## CANCER

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S., killing 1,575 people each day.
- 1.6 million people receive a cancer diagnosis every year in the U.S.
- More than 580,000 people in the U.S. lose their lives to the disease each year.
- Only five percent of cancers are hereditary.
- Approximately 2/3 of cancer deaths are caused by using tobacco products, physical inactivity, and poor diet choice.

**Obesity is poised to surpass tobacco as the leading cause of cancer within a few years.**

## RISK FACTORS

- **Obesity:** Approximately 2/3 of Americans are obese or overweight. By 2030, half of Americans will be obese (at this rate). Obesity is poised to surpass tobacco as the leading cause of cancer within a few years.
- **Diet:** Eating healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables can help individuals maintain a healthy weight and reduce their cancer risk. Yet, 40 percent of Americans misjudge the quality of their diets, believing themselves to be healthier than they are.
- **Exercise:** Regular exercise can reduce the risk of cancer, yet only 20 percent of Americans meet the recommended guide lines for aerobic physical activity and muscle strength training.
- **Tobacco:** Approximately 20 percent of Americans use tobacco products. Up to 85 percent of lung cancer is related to smoking and 30 percent of all cancer deaths are attributable to tobacco. In fact, many people diagnosed with lung cancer had already quit smoking (50 percent) or had never smoked (15 percent). This is one more reason why screening is critical.
- **Sun:** Approximately 63,000 new cases and 9,000 deaths are attributable to melanoma (the deadliest form of skin cancer) each year—with a price tag of over \$8 billion.
- **Alcohol:** Drinking alcohol poses a cancer risk, yet a quarter of adults report binge drinking.



## COST

- Cancer will cost the nation \$158 billion by the year 2020.
- Obesity costs the U.S. \$196 billion each year.
- Tobacco use costs the U.S. \$96 billion each year.
- The U.S. spends 75 percent of \$2.5 trillion annual health care dollars on treatment of chronic conditions.
- Only three cents of every health care dollar goes towards prevention.

**Cancer will cost the nation \$158 billion by the year 2020.**

## PREVENTION

- Fewer than half of all Americans receive the recommended preventive services.
- Prevention efforts can save 4.5 million lives and almost \$600 billion over the next 25 years.
- Research shows that up to 60 percent of cancer cases and more than 50 percent of cancer deaths are preventable —if we just act on the knowledge we have right now.

## SCREENING FOR PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION

- There are tests to detect some cancers early when a successful outcome is more likely.
- Some screening tests can also detect precancerous conditions before they become cancer.
- Cancer treatment is generally more effective when the disease is found early.
- However, not all types of cancer have screening tests.

# Prevent Cancer Foundation

## Policy Priorities

The advocacy work of the Prevent Cancer Foundation is driven by the following policy priorities. Each is accomplished through work with the U.S. Congress and Executive Branch (including federal agencies) as well as other health care organizations, state legislatures, and relevant stakeholders, including our grassroots advocates.



### PREVENTION

Support and work towards policies and education efforts that will reduce cancer diagnoses and preventable deaths.



### ACCESS

Increase access to necessary health care services including cancer prevention and early detection screening and resources.



### DISPARITIES

Reduce the barriers for all individuals (particularly those who are underserved) to achieve optimal health and wellness including, but not limited to, access, affordability, and equity.



### FUNDING

Ensure adequate funding for cancer research and prevention efforts at federal and state levels.



### HEALTH CARE

Promote patient-centered, accessible, integrated, high-quality health care for all.



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