

April 22, 2022

Dear Member of Congress,

As organizations representing lung cancer patients, veterans, nurses, doctors, caregivers, and researchers, **we urge you to support \$60 million for the Lung Cancer Research Program** within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) in the Fiscal Year 2023 Defense appropriations bill.

We were deeply frustrated to learn that **in FY21, because of a lack of funding, the Lung Cancer Research Program was forced to reject 82 out of 119 research proposals rated excellent or outstanding by reviewers (70%)**. This represents 82 missed opportunities to advance novel, desperately needed technologies and treatments to fight America's top cancer killer. A \$60 million appropriation could have funded all of these high-quality proposals. We ask you to support lung cancer patients by making this critical funding commitment now.

The past two decades of medical research have brought new hope to the approximately 235,000 Americans diagnosed with lung cancer each year.<sup>1</sup> Diagnostic, surgical and therapeutic innovations have increased the five-year lung cancer survival rate by 14% to 23.7% over the past five years. However, 23.7% lags significantly behind almost every other major cancer.<sup>2</sup> Without a cure, lung cancer patients, most of whom are diagnosed at advanced stages, confront the terrible reality that their current cancer therapies will inevitably fail. Lung cancer patients' survival depends on significantly more research into everything from early detection to treatments that combat resistance to existing therapeutics.

Despite many scientific advances, lung cancer remains the country's leading cause of cancer deaths among women (21%) and men (21%). Each day, more than 350 people die of lung cancer, which is more than those who die of breast, prostate and pancreatic cancers combined. It is 2.5 times more than those who die of colorectal cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths.<sup>i</sup>

Veterans are at significantly greater risk for lung cancer and are diagnosed at higher rates than the general population.<sup>3</sup> The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) estimates that 900,000 veterans are at risk for lung cancer due to age, significantly higher rates of smoking—particularly among those deployed—and toxic exposures during military service and after.<sup>4</sup>

**Even though lung cancer has the highest mortality rate of all cancers, is the second most prevalent cancer among VHA patients (18%), and has by far the most VHA patients (58%) who are diagnosed at stages three or four,<sup>iii</sup> it received only 3.46% (\$20 million) of the \$577.5 million in CDMRP cancer funds in FY22, less than every named CDMRP cancer except one.**

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<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Statistics 2022, Journal of the American Cancer Society, Volume 72, Number 1, January/February 2022.

<sup>2</sup> State of Lung Cancer 2021, American Lung Association, <https://www.lung.org/research/state-of-lung-cancer/key-findings>

<sup>3</sup> Based on Lullig, Sims et al. Cancer Incidence Among Patients of the U.S. Veterans Affairs Health Care System: 2010. Updated July 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, [https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/docs/Go2\\_FactSheet.pdf](https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/docs/Go2_FactSheet.pdf)

CDMRP's Lung Cancer Research Program accelerates high impact, translational research, making it essential to lung cancer patients who are in a race against the clock to find novel, life-saving treatments. While we ask for a major increase for the Lung Cancer Research Program, we strongly support raising the overall federal funding level for all cancer programs. We don't want new funding of any individual cancer to come at the expense of any other cancer.

With its history of bipartisan support for NCI, CURES, CURES 2.0, ARPA-H and the Cancer Moonshot, we urge Congress to appropriate \$60 million for LCRP to better reflect and respect lung cancer's real and devastating impact on service members, veterans, and all Americans. \$60 million dollars is a critical, overdue step toward addressing the unmatched burden lung cancer has inflicted upon too many Americans, their families and communities. We have been at the back of the line too long.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation  
Addario Lung Cancer Medical Institute (ALCMI)  
ALK Fusion  
ALK Positive  
American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists Foundation (AARST Foundation)  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Radiology (ACR)  
American College of Surgeons  
American Lung Cancer Screening Initiative  
American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO)  
Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI)  
Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC)  
Baptist Health  
Biomarker Collaborative  
BRAF Bombers  
Breath of Hope Kentucky  
Breath of Hope Ohio  
Burn Pits 360 Veterans  
Cancer Survivors Against Radon (CanSAR)  
Caring Ambassadors  
Cease Fire Campaign  
Chris Draft Family Foundation  
Citizens for Radioactive Radon Reduction  
Clifton F. Mountain Foundation for Education & Research in Lung Cancer  
DignifiHealth  
EGFR Resisters  
Eon  
Exon 20 Group  
Free ME from Lung Cancer  
Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education (GeorgiaCORE)  
Georgia Lung Cancer Round Table  
Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology (GASCO)  
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer

Heroes Center Veterans Support Camp  
Indiana University Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center  
International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC)  
International Cancer Advocacy Network (ICAN)  
Kentucky Academy of Family Physicians  
Kentucky Cancer Foundation  
Kentucky Cancer Link  
Kentucky Cancer Program-East  
Kentucky Health Collaborative  
Kentucky Hospital Association  
Kentucky LEADS Collaborative  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Kentucky Society of Clinical Oncology  
KRAS Kickers  
LiveLung  
Lung Cancer Action Network (LungCAN)  
Lung Cancer Connection  
Lung Cancer Foundation of America  
Lung Cancer Initiative  
Lung Cancer Research Foundation  
LUNgevity Foundation  
LungLife AI  
Med Center Health  
MET Crusaders  
Moffitt Cancer Center  
Nucleix  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Prevent Cancer Foundation  
Rescue Lung Society  
Respiratory Health Association  
RET Renegades  
Rexanna's Foundation  
Ride Hard Breathe Easy  
Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
St. Elizabeth Healthcare  
Stages Lung Cancer Support Network  
Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians  
The Patient Story  
The ROS1ders  
The White Ribbon Project  
Thynk Health  
University of Hawaii Cancer Center  
University of Colorado Cancer Center  
University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center  
University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center  
University of Vermont Cancer Center  
Upstage Lung Cancer

# Supporting Organizations

