

For World Cancer Day, Alliance for Cancer Care Equity Advocates to ‘Close the Care Gap’ as Observance is Honored With Congressional Resolution

For World Cancer Day, NCCN, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), and the National Minority Quality Forum (NMQF) announced 3 key areas of policy focus as part of the Alliance for Cancer Care Equity (ACCE) joint collaboration, including advancing diversity in clinical trials, improving cancer screening and early detection, and increasing access to patient navigation. The organizations are also working with Congresswoman Terri Sewell (D-AL) to observe the day with a congressional resolution.

According to the resolution, the United States Congress will designate February 4th as World Cancer Day to highlight the importance of taking meaningful action to raise awareness of the disparities that exist in cancer care, and support efforts to close the care gap. Despite progress in recent years, Black Americans have the highest death rate and lowest survival rate of any racial or ethnic group for most cancers.¹ Compared with White people, mortality rates are two-fold higher for prostate, stomach, and uterine corpus cancers in Black people and for liver, stomach, and kidney cancers in Native American people.²

World Cancer Day is a global awareness day organized by the Union of International Cancer Control (UICC) every February 4th. The 2024 observance marks the third and final year for the “Close the Care Gap” campaign focused on reducing disparities in cancer treatment and outcomes.

The ACCE will continue to identify governmental actions to drive further improvements in the three areas of focus and advance necessary structural changes to cancer care delivery throughout the United States. They call on members of Congress to support:

- H.R.1826/S.2821—PSA Screening for HIM Act
- H.R.4286—Increasing Access to Lung Cancer Screening Act
- H.R.4363/S.2213—Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act

“We must ensure that every person with cancer—regardless of race/ethnicity, geographic location, or other societal factors—has equal access to life-saving early detection, treatment, and support,” said Crystal S. Denlinger, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. “Improving diversity in clinical trials is fundamental to advance cancer care. It will help us fill knowledge gaps—such as how effective various innovations are for people with different backgrounds—and ensure that every patient is being informed of all their treatment options. We also know that disparities in access to screening lead to later stage at diagnosis, resulting in unequal outcomes and reduced longevity in marginalized populations. Patient navigation can address some of the existing imbalances, and we applaud recent progress to make that more accessible to the people who need it. We commend Congress for their World Cancer Day resolution, and call on lawmakers, public and private payers, federal agencies, and local policymakers to continue this important work to help close the care gap.”

“Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to live a longer, healthier life free from cancer regardless of how much money they make, the color of their skin, their sexual orientation, their gender identity, their disability status, or where they live,” said Lisa A. Lacasse, President, ACS CAN. “Increasing diverse representation in clinical trials, improving access to cancer screening and prevention services, and ensuring patient navigation services are accessible to all who are

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diagnosed with cancer are critical to reducing the cancer burden for everyone. We urge lawmakers to help close the cancer care gap by supporting these policies.”

“We are at a real crossroads regarding the provisioning of cancer care in America,” said Gary A. Puckrein, NMQF President and CEO. “The profound lack of access to early detection and intervention, coupled with a scarcity of robust health care infrastructure, exacerbates disparities and propagates a tiered health care system, which has permitted medically underserved cancer care communities. While we are encouraged by growing acknowledgement of these issues, NMQF urges lawmakers that the time is now to prioritize the needs of marginalized communities to collectively close the gap in cancer care.”

The ACCE grew out of the joint Elevating Cancer Equity initiative, first launched by NCCN, ACS CAN, and NMQF in 2021. At the time, a working group identified 16 actionable policy changes to address structural inequities in care. Since then, the group has worked with policymakers, regulators, and administrators to achieve several of those goals. Those successes include legislation directing the FDA to release guidance on decentralized clinical trials, the inclusion of reimbursement for patient navigation services from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and several state-level initiatives policies to increase access to lung cancer screening.

Visit [NCCN.org/wcd](https://www.nccn.org/wcd) to learn more about World Cancer Day and the ACCE’s efforts.

References

1. DeSantis CE, Miller KD, Sauer G, et al. Cancer statistics for African Americans, 2019. *CA A Cancer J Clin* 2019;69:211–233.
 2. American Cancer Society. Cancer facts & figures 2004. Accessed February 1, 2024. Available at: <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/all-cancer-facts-figures/2024-cancer-facts-figures.html>
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PatientPoint Brings NCCN Resources for Patients to Oncology Practices Nationwide

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PatientPoint announced a new collaboration with the NCCN Foundation to expand use of NCCN Guidelines for Patients in oncology practices nationwide. The collaboration leverages the PatientPoint digital patient engagement platform to bring trustworthy patient education materials on common cancer types to people with cancer, providers, and caregivers in the exam room.

“This collaboration with PatientPoint provides a new way for us to make sure people with cancer and their loved ones are using the NCCN Guidelines for Patients to help them understand their options and take part in informed, shared decision-making,” said NCCN Foundation Executive Director Patrick Delaney. “Spreading the word about our resources at the point of care—when patients, families, and providers are faced with complex choices—will enable us to connect our resources with more people who will benefit from them.”

PatientPoint will share information on NCCN Guidelines for Patients on its exam room touchscreens, enabling people with cancer, caregivers, and providers to review and discuss content onscreen and to send guidelines via email or text for further review.

“In the face of an overwhelming cancer diagnosis, information is power,” said PatientPoint Executive Vice President of Content and Creative Kate Merz. “Through our new collaboration with the NCCN Foundation, we will deliver trusted, timely, evidence-based information to help empower people with cancer and their families—and contribute to better outcomes.”