

American Cancer Society Receives Million Dollar Support to Expand and Accelerate Cancer Screening Initiative

Organizations encourage everyone to schedule appropriate life-saving cancer screenings as soon as possible

ATLANTA, Sept. 22, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- The American Cancer Society (ACS), with the generous support of million-dollar sponsors Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, the National Football League (NFL), Merck (known as MSD outside the United States and Canada), Novartis Oncology and Pfizer Oncology, is spearheading a comprehensive movement to dramatically and swiftly increase cancer screening rates. Additional sponsors for the initiative include AmerisourceBergen, BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) and Intuitive.

These sponsors have joined ACS in its goal of raising \$30 million for a multi-faceted national initiative to ensure access for everyone to recommended cancer screenings and reduce screening disparities. The goals for this work include improving screening rates for breast, cervical, colorectal, and lung cancers and ensuring everyone has access to recommended screenings since screening disparities have increased for people with greater social or economic barriers. Components of the initiative include a national consortium of public health groups and professional organizations, the development and support of state and local coalitions, engagement of health systems to implement evidence-based screening interventions, the launch of a public awareness campaign, dedicated research activities to better understand lessons learned, progress and policy solutions, and a renewed push for known public policy solutions that can benefit all.

Partner support is a key component of the American Cancer Society's overall screening campaign, which aims to not only restore but improve pre-pandemic cancer screening routines and prevent later-stage cancer diagnosis in the wake of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about dramatic declines in screening rates for breast, cervical, colorectal and lung cancers, which means that many cancers could be going undiagnosed and untreated," said Dr. Karen Knudsen, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society. "As a result, the American Cancer Society foresees that pandemic-related decreases in health care access and cancer screenings will result in a short-term drop in cancer diagnoses and an increase in late-stage diagnoses and potentially preventable deaths. The critical screening initiative supported by our corporate sponsors will significantly increase cancer screening rates and ultimately save lives."

Through the partner-supported screening initiative, ACS will work with local and regional communities, primary care providers, national and local consortia, health care systems and policymakers on increasing access to cancer screening to find and treat cancer and help more people survive cancer.

With the support of corporate partners, the American Cancer Society has launched a public awareness campaign aimed at increasing screening rates. The campaign includes targeting messages and advertising to reach the Hispanic/LatinX population with vital cancer screening information. ACS is also working with individual states to develop action plans around increasing screening rates as well as initiating studies on how COVID-19 has influenced access to care, especially among cancer survivors. Other initiatives include convening national and regional learning collaborative webinars with health systems to troubleshoot screening challenges and share promising practices and continuing to educate federal and state policymakers on the importance of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP).

SOURCE American Cancer Society

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