American Cancer Society Sets Goal of Doubling Research Funding

Move Supports White House Moonshot

Atlanta, GA – June 28, 2016 – The American Cancer Society, the largest private, not-for-profit funder of cancer research, is announcing a goal to double its annual funding for research by 2021. The goal is one of the primary ways the American Cancer Society (ACS) and its advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), are supporting the National Cancer Moonshot to accelerate progress against a disease that will kill 595,000 people in America this year.

ACS is making the announcement in conjunction with Vice President Biden's National Cancer Moonshot Summit at Howard University in Washington, D.C. ACS and ACS CAN Chief Executive Officer Gary Reedy is attending the summit, along with ACS Chief Medical Officer Otis Brawley, ACS CAN President Chris Hansen and Dr. Kevin Cullen, ACS Board Scientific Officer. Rob Youle, former chairman of both the ACS and ACS CAN volunteer boards and ACS CAN volunteers George Blough from West Virginia and Thelma Jones from Washington, D.C. will also be attending to represent the patient experience.

"The American Cancer Society is putting our stake in the ground to continue to be the leading nonprofit funder for cancer research," said Reedy, CEO for both ACS and ACS CAN. "We're making a financial pledge that will challenge us and our supporters to step up, focus and deliver results at levels we've never done before. This is the kind of leadership and perseverance that must come from every sector of the cancer community – from nonprofits to government to corporate and community leaders."

ACS plans to increase its annual research investment to approximately $240 million by 2021. The organization currently spends about $100 million per year in new grants to academic research institutions and another $15 to $20 million annually in research by ACS investigators in cancer epidemiology, surveillance and health services, behavioral research, and economics and health policy.

The increase will dramatically grow what is already the largest and arguably most successful not-for-profit research program in the nation. ACS has invested $4.5 billion in research since 1946 with clear results: ACS has played a role in most of the major cancer research breakthroughs in recent history, and 47 of its funded researchers have won Nobel Prizes for their work.

In addition to research, ACS's leadership in prevention and early detection will also support the National Cancer Moonshot Initiative. ACS educates the public about how making healthy life choices and getting appropriate screening can prevent cancer death.

Lobbying Congress

ACS CAN is also committing to accelerating cancer research through its advocacy work. The advocacy organization is calling on Congress to build upon last year's bipartisan-supported funding increases for the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute by boosting the federal investment in cancer research by $680 million this year – for a total increased investment of $1 billion dollars over two years. The commitment is part of ACS CAN's ongoing #OneDegree campaign, which underscores the reality that everyone is just one degree from a beloved family member, friend or co-worker who has been diagnosed with cancer. Since the launch of the campaign, thousands of volunteers across the country have contacted their members of Congress to urge them to prioritize cancer research funding in the federal budget.

“Congress can’t let this moment pass – we’re on the cusp of so many new developments in diagnostic tests and treatments thanks to past investment that has allowed us to understand cancer at the molecular level,” said Chris Hansen, president of ACS CAN. “Lifesaving cancer treatments have one thing in common: they begin with basic research led by the NIH and the NCI. Congress must continue the funding momentum if we are going to conquer cancer.”

Just last week, ACS CAN launched a new ad campaign to focus public and congressional attention on the need to boost federal funding for cancer research. The ads will run in Capitol Hill print publications and online in national outlets coinciding with both the ongoing Congressional budget process and the National Cancer Moonshot Summit. (Click here for more information on the ad campaign.)

Mobilizing Grassroots Networks

ACS and ACS CAN are also mobilizing millions of grassroots volunteers across the country to support the Moonshot initiative.

In conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services, ACS CAN is supporting 10 regional events at nationally designated cancer centers across the country, and ACS and ACS CAN are together holding more than 80 watch parties nationwide for volunteers and others to view highlights of the June 29 National Cancer Moonshot Summit at Howard University. During the events, volunteers will be asked to make their own personal commitments to conquer cancer, including everything from making healthy life choices to increasing their fundraising efforts to volunteering for programs that support cancer patients. ACS CAN will also ask its volunteers to contact their Members of Congress and advocate for increased cancer research funding at every opportunity.
