

President Biden Doubles Down on his Call to End Cancer as We Know It in State of the Union Address

Washington, D.C.— March 1, 2022 – In his State of the Union address tonight, President Biden again called on the nation to work together to end cancer as we know it.

“The American Cancer Society (ACS) and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) have a long track record of programs, public policies and advocacy aligned with the President’s priorities for ending cancer as we know it and we stand ready to make the Moonshot goal a reality,” said Dr. Karen E. Knudsen, CEO of ACS and ACS CAN. “We were pleased to hear the President again call on lawmakers, health care providers, the cancer community at large and the American people to join together in this mission. By accelerating discovery, improving access to services patients and their families need and advancing public policy we will change the trajectory of this disease.”

ACS CAN recently shared a [letter](#) with the administration outlining policy changes that would help bring the US closer to the President’s goal, including increasing access to health coverage through Medicaid expansion, increasing funding for cancer research at the NIH and NCI, appropriating additional funding for a new Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health and reducing tobacco use by removing all flavors from all tobacco products.

“We know so much of what needs to be done to reduce suffering and death from cancer and we look forward to working with the administration and all levels of governments to reach this goal,” said Lisa Lacasse, president of ACS CAN. “By focusing on public policies to prevent cancer, including ensuring individuals have access to screening, to detect it early and affordable, quality health coverage so if someone does get a cancer diagnosis, they can get the treatment they need, we will make significant progress to ending cancer as we know it.”

President Biden also called on Congress to do more to address affordability of care, including passing paid family medical leave and closing the coverage gap by making increased tax subsidies for purchase of private coverage on the marketplace permanent. Having access to paid medical and family leave is critical for cancer patients, caregivers and survivors. According to a recent ACS CAN [survey](#), 74% of cancer patients and survivors say they missed work due to their illness; most of whom (69%) reported missing more than four weeks of work. Additionally, making permanent increased subsidies for middle income Americans to purchase coverage on the exchange will help ensure continued progress in our efforts against cancer by reducing cost burdens in accessing care.

“Millions of Americans have seen their monthly premiums significantly decline, including many whose premiums are now zero,” said Lacasse. “Ensuring these marketplace health plans stay affordable by making subsidies permanent and closing the coverage gap by increasing access to Medicaid are critical to ensuring more people can get and keep the coverage they need. ACS CAN has and will continue to work with Members of Congress and state lawmakers to help address affordability of care.”

Additionally, the President urged Congress to expand institutional aid grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to create educational programs in high-demand fields including STEM, an effort to which the ACS is deeply committed. In 2021 ACS invested \$16 million to four HBCU medical schools through our [Diversity in Cancer Research program](#), and last week awarded more than \$16 million to establish [Cancer Health Equity Research Centers](#) at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs.) To address further disparities in cancer care, the ACS patient support team serves cancer patients and their families through education, lodging, and transportation to cancer treatments.

Finally, the president called for expanded benefits for veterans who have been exposed to carcinogenic toxins during military service.

“The American Cancer Society and ACS CAN applaud the president for prioritizing access to care for military veterans,” Knudsen said. “As the daughter of an army special forces officer, I understand the extraordinary risk faced by veterans. Presumptive status will help to ensure servicemen and women who are diagnosed with cancer following toxic exposure don't face unnecessary delays or other barriers to accessing disability benefits.”

In 2022, there will be an estimated 1.9 million new cancer cases diagnosed in the US and more than 609,000 people will die from the 200 diseases we call cancer.

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About ACS

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 1.5 million volunteers dedicated to saving lives, celebrating lives, and leading the fight for a world without cancer. From breakthrough research, to free lodging near treatment, a 24/7/365 live helpline, free rides to treatment, and convening powerful activists to create awareness and impact, the Society is the only organization attacking cancer from every angle. For more information go to www.cancer.org.

About ACS CAN at 20

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) makes cancer a top priority for policymakers at every level of government. ACS CAN empowers volunteers across the country to make their voices heard to influence evidence-based public policy change that saves lives. We believe everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, find, treat, and survive cancer. Since 2001, as the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN has successfully advocated for billions of dollars in cancer research funding, expanded access to quality affordable health care, and made workplaces, including restaurants and bars, smoke-free. As we mark our 20th anniversary, we're more determined than ever to stand together with our volunteers and save more lives from cancer. Join the fight by visiting www.fightcancer.org.
