The American Cancer Society Announces Expansion of its Get Screened Initiative to Increase Lung Cancer Screening Rates

Initiative will increase access to lung cancer screening for all patients, with a focus on communities with historical inequities

ATLANTA, Nov. 30, 2023 – The American Cancer Society (ACS) proudly announces the expansion of its Get Screened initiative, to increase lung cancer screening rates by partnering with local health systems and sharing information regarding cancer screenings appropriately, safely, and most importantly, equitably. This builds upon the existing efforts initiated in 2020, which focused on communities that faced historical inequities and suffered the most from the pandemic. The expansion of Get Screened is supported by Merck, as well as Regeneron, Genentech – a Roche company, and other notable funding partners.

The expansion for Get Screened follows the organization's announcement of the updated lung cancer screening guideline earlier this month. To further raise screening rates and reduce lung cancer deaths, ACS expanded the age range for eligibility and lowered the requirement for pack-year history of smoking. The updated guideline also eliminates the previous 'years since quitting' requirement.

Now in its third year, the Get Screened initiative has had a profound effect on increasing screening rates for cancer. In 2022, ACS led a screening cohort that included 114 community-focused screening projects at 726 clinics, cancer centers, and Federally Qualified Health Centers throughout the US. Through this collaboration, more than 362,400 additional breast, cervical, colorectal, and lung screenings were conducted, leading to the diagnosis of nearly 6,900 cancers.

As experts in cancer screening, ACS delivers trainings, quality improvement assistance, and programmatic support by partnering health systems to help implement evidence-based interventions to increase cancer screening rates among their patient populations. Through these collaborations, cancer screening rates increased by an average of seven percentage points.

Beginning in 2024, through support from Merck and other supporting partners, the screening cohort will expand funding toward lung cancer screening including capacity and support activities, such as quality improvement, mobile screening, screening navigation, outreach, and technology, with the hopes of supporting early detection. Together, through this focused effort, ACS and the supporting partners will increase access to lung cancer screening with the aim to reach up to 10,000 additional eligible individuals.

In the United States, lung cancer is the second most common cancer. It's also the leading cause of death from cancer, making regular screening even more important. If lung cancer is found at an early stage before it has spread, it is more likely to be treated successfully.

"It is through partnerships like this that we are able to accelerate our efforts to improve lung cancer screening rates and save lives," said Dr. Karen E. Knudsen, CEO of the American Cancer Society. "Raising awareness and increasing screening rates go hand in hand with dethroning lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States."

"Progress in lung cancer research over the last few years has provided renewed hope for patients and their families – but we know there is more work to be done, particularly when it comes to improving screening rates," said Dr. Marjorie Green, senior vice president and head of late-stage oncology, global clinical development, Merck Research Laboratories. "It is clear that detection of earlier-stage disease can make a significant difference for patients, and I'm hopeful that the continued efforts from the health care and advocacy communities will increase awareness around the importance of lung cancer screenings and help diagnose patients earlier, when they have the best chance for better outcomes."

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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