

# American Cancer Society Statement: Dr. Karen E. Knudsen on Dr. Francis Collins's Cancer Diagnosis

**ATLANTA, April 12, 2024** – In light of the recent news regarding Dr. Francis Collins, former director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and his prostate cancer diagnosis, [the American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) extends its full support as he navigates his cancer journey.

Comment from [Dr. Karen E. Knudsen](#), CEO of the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) and the [American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#) (ACS CAN):

*We applaud Dr. Collins for being forthcoming about his prostate cancer diagnosis in an effort to bring awareness to this disease. Dr. Collins has made life-changing contributions to improving human health through science and, on behalf of ACS and ACS CAN, I offer our support and well wishes as he begins his cancer treatment. We look forward to his full recovery and return to his important work. Dr. Collins is a brilliant mind who throughout his career has broken new ground in cancer research. Among the most impactful contributions was his role in the mapping of the human genome under the NIH Human Genome Project, while he was director at the National Human Genome Research Institute. This achievement is considered one of the most life-changing initiatives in the history of biology research.*

*As NIH director, a number of significant research initiatives were created and implemented. One of the most significant initiatives to cancer is the Cancer Moonshot which has expanded the use of early cancer detection strategies, increased research efforts for childhood cancer, and sped the development of improved immunotherapies. Dr. Collins' stewardship also saw increases in NIH funding from \$29.5 billion to \$43 billion during his tenure.*

*This news is a reminder about the tragic impact of prostate cancer in the US, where about one in eight men will be diagnosed over their lifetime with prostate cancer. Although it is a highly survivable disease when caught in early stages, it is the second leading cause of cancer death in men. Early detection is key, and we are concerned given the 5% year-over-year increase in diagnosis of men with more advanced disease. We can and must do more to prevent late-stage diagnosis and death from prostate cancer. [ACS](#) and [ACS CAN](#) are increasing our efforts in the progress against prostate cancer and removing barriers to early detection is critical.”*

According to the [American Cancer Society's Cancer Facts & Figures, 2024](#), an estimated 299,010 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. and 35,250 men will die from the disease this year.

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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.

## **About ACS CAN**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) makes cancer a top priority for policymakers at every level of government. ACS CAN engages volunteers across the country to make their voices heard to ensure that our cities, our states, and our nation adopt evidence-based public policies that improve the lives of people with cancer and their families. We believe everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, 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 advanced proven tobacco control measures. We stand with our volunteers,

working to change public policy to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. Join the fight by visiting [www.fightcancer.org](http://www.fightcancer.org).

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