

Leading Cancer Organizations Warn Cancer Doesn't Stop for COVID-19 and Neither Should You

National Comprehensive Cancer Network and American Cancer Society are leading nationwide effort to resume appropriate cancer screening and treatment to prevent excess deaths.

ATLANTA, GA and PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA — The National Comprehensive Cancer Network® ([NCCN](#)®) and the American Cancer Society ([ACS](#)) are teaming up with leading cancer organizations across the country to endorse the resumption of cancer screening and treatment during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The coalition of 76 organizations today released an open [letter](#) reminding the public that cancer still poses a major threat to people's health, but acting as soon as is safely possible can lead to much better outcomes in the future. The letter examines distressing trends showing a significant drop-off in recommended cancer screening and treatment compared to prior years. This concerning side-effect of the pandemic could lead to a staggering number of preventable cancer deaths over the next ten years and beyond. Oncology experts agree that people should not delay any necessary prevention or care.

"When cancer is caught earlier, it is typically easier to treat because there are more options available," said **Robert W. Carlson, MD, CEO, NCCN**. "When the pandemic first hit the United States, a short delay in care was an appropriate choice for many cancer types. However, the balance of risk has shifted significantly. We now have two impressive vaccines that are being distributed around the world. We also know much more about how to treat and prevent COVID-19. Cancer centers are taking multiple measures to protect patients and staff from COVID-19 and transmission within cancer centers is quite unusual. Meanwhile, far too many cancers are being left to grow unchecked. Postponing cancer care will add tragedy on top of tragedy."

"It is of the utmost importance that critical cancer screenings resume as soon as safely possible," said **William G. Cance, MD, Chief Medical and Scientific Officer of the American Cancer Society**. "Over the past decade we have seen overall cancer mortality rates drop dramatically. This decline is in large part due to screening's ability to catch cancers before they spread—when the chances of good outcomes are most likely. We have come too far in our fight against cancer to allow long breaks in vital screening to slow down our progress in saving lives."

Hospitals and medical systems across the country have already begun vaccinating health care providers among other measures to ensure a safe environment for people receiving cancer screening and treatment. The confirmed use of [evidence-based precautions](#) against COVID-19 should provide reassurance against fears of infection during necessary medical care.

The letter points out that researchers around the world have made tremendous strides in controlling cancer in recent years. Leading oncology experts are now asking everyone, in coordination with their health care provider, to resume preventive and prescribed care and contact their doctor right away about any new symptoms or concerns.

Visit [NCCN.org/resume-screening](#) or [acs4ccc.org/ReengageLetter](#) to read the entire letter. For general guidance and information about cancer, visit [NCCN.org](#) or [Cancer.org](#).

For further information: Teri Mitchell Porter teri.mitchellporter@cancer.org
