

CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**A PATIENT-CENTERED FORUM OF NATIONAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS
ADDRESSING PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES IN CANCER**

CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL RESPONDS TO HHS REDUCTIONS IN FORCE AND DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION

April 8, 2025. – The undersigned cancer organizations, which represent people with cancer; cancer care professionals; researchers; and caregivers, families and friends of those with cancer, issued the following statement in response to the mass reductions in force at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the reorganization of the department.

The Cancer Leadership Council expresses its alarm about the sweeping reductions in force at HHS that have the potential to adversely affect cancer research and development, cancer care, and the quality of life of those living with cancer and their caregivers, families, and friends. Although the reductions in force at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); National Institutes of Health (NIH), including the National Cancer Institute (NCI); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) are of greatest concern for their possible negative impact on cancer research and care, we believe that other HHS reductions in force and reorganizational efforts may also affect cancer patients adversely.

The nation's efforts to combat cancer, from diagnosis through treatment and long-term survivorship, have depended on public and private partners, including patient-focused service and educational organizations, nonprofit research foundations, academic institutions and their talented research teams, the biopharmaceutical industry, and federal partners including researchers, regulatory reviewers, reimbursement experts, and prevention and early diagnosis experts. For example, taking a life-saving cancer treatment from bench to bedside typically involves all of these experts from the private and public sectors working collaboratively.

Over many decades, our partnerships with federal employees have been productive and constructive. We insist on efficiency and effectiveness in our own cancer research and care initiatives and expect the same from our federal partners. Assessing efficiency and effectiveness requires rigorous analysis and then commitment to change, if it is indicated. The rigor and planning behind the HHS reductions in force and reorganization recommendations are unclear to us and many in the cancer community. We encourage a transparent and collaborative effort related to reorganization of HHS.

We care deeply about the individual partners in our cancer efforts who are being fired, but we want to reiterate our serious concern that there will not be adequate numbers of researchers, program administrators, regulators, and health care professionals to meet the needs of cancer patients and to fuel research and development efforts as a result of the ongoing reductions in force.

We also have serious concerns about the impact of these reductions in the work force on the research community in the long-term. Some leaders in cancer research have already moved their research teams to Europe. Young investigators are discouraged by the lack of clarity about the NIH research grant outlook, and others have lost funding for their “current” grants. The potential of a research brain drain is significant, and the recent reductions in force exacerbate an already discouraging situation.

We remain optimistic about the innovative spirit of Americans and our ability as a nation to develop new cancer treatments and make life better for all who hear the words, “you have cancer.” But to realize our great potential as a nation depends on a strong and sustained federal commitment to cancer research and care, including a strong federal health workforce.

Cancer Leadership Council

Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators

Cancer*Care*

Cancer Support Community

Children’s Cancer Cause

Fight Colorectal Cancer

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

International Myeloma Foundation

LUNGeVity Foundation

Lymphoma Research Foundation

Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance