

My First 100 Days as President & CEO of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

September 18, 2023 By Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Dear Friends,

I'm just over 100 days into my new role as President & CEO of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) and I want to take this moment to say how grateful and proud I am to work alongside all of you in service of blood cancer patients and their families. It's been great meeting many of you as I travel to our regions and meet with departments throughout the country. And I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months ahead.

As a physician and researcher for over 20 years, I had already witnessed the incredible difference we make for blood cancer patients and families. And now that I've officially joined LLS, I'm learning even more about the depth and breadth of our world-changing organization and our amazing staff, volunteers, philanthropists, partners and researchers—all committed to driving bold progress in blood cancer treatment and care.

LLS is an organization of experts representing a range of disciplines and empowering comprehensive programs in support of [research](#), [patient services](#), [education resources](#) and [policy and advocacy](#). It is this multi-disciplinary and holistic expertise that sets us apart as the leading blood cancer nonprofit. It enables us to support patients and families through every part of their blood cancer experience—from diagnosis through treatment and beyond. And we have enormous opportunity to reach more of the patients and families who need us.

As I reflect on my first 100 days, here are the opportunities that stand out to me as we work together to build on our momentum and shape the future at LLS.

- We are transforming blood cancer treatment and care—for today and tomorrow. We are a leading force in what the New York Times calls the “Golden Age for medicine,” where advances like immunotherapy and targeted therapy have led to significantly increased survival rates across blood cancers and, with our support, are continuing to advance at an astounding pace. In the last six years alone, LLS has helped advance more than 70% of the 110 blood cancer treatment options approved by the FDA. Our early and sustained investment was vital to the

development of CAR T immunotherapy and the first targeted therapy, imatinib, also known as Gleevec—both now a lifeline for thousands of blood cancer patients. Our ongoing investments are aimed at continuing to drive forward next-generation, innovative immune and targeted therapies and to make them available to more patients at all stages of treatment. And our [Dare to Dream Project](#) and first-ever [PedAL master clinical trial for pediatric acute leukemia](#) are revolutionizing blood cancer treatment and care for children.

- Every patient deserves quality cancer care. Yet we know that some groups of patients face more healthcare barriers than others. And since many of the newest treatments are prohibitively expensive and often only available in big-city cancer centers, it becomes even harder for patients to access the treatment they need. Geography, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status must not be the arbiters of who survives and thrives. As we usher in a Golden Age of Medicine, we must establish and hold ourselves accountable to Gold Standards of health equity. LLS's seminal [health equity research](#) and real-time patient services are helping us better understand the underlying causes contributing to health disparities and [identify policy solutions](#). Our patient community outreach teams in communities across the country continue to make inroads to combat barriers to health equity. And our [Impact Research Grants](#) work to increase enrollment of individuals from underrepresented communities in clinical trials. Increasing equitable access to blood cancer care requires working in communities and with state and federal legislatures to drive policies that break down barriers to care.
- We must relentlessly pursue the future we believe to be possible—the future all patients deserve. LLS is poised to pioneer and fund future breakthroughs in science, support and advocacy that will continue transforming healthcare for blood cancer patients and their families. We are the best and most innovative organization out there in [peer-to-peer fundraising](#), and we are building a culture of philanthropy to nurture and grow deep, lasting relationships with philanthropists looking for meaningful ways to create a better world for patients and their families. As we look to the future, we will look for new ways to develop deep connections with philanthropists, communities and patients so that LLS is positioned for success for many years

to come. Together we will unlock new opportunities for powering and stewarding our mission.

- There is so much energy and creativity across our organization—it's like a coiled spring ready to launch us to the next level of blood cancer treatment and care. But to get there, we need a clear roadmap. Our senior leadership is working collaboratively with representatives from departments across the organization on a multi-year strategic plan that will define where we are, where we're headed and what it will take to get us there. It will provide a framework to assess market dynamics, identify future trends and proactively respond to them. The strategic plan will inspire the hearts and minds of employees and volunteers—motivating us to reach higher levels of achievement in driving our mission forward.

I envision LLS continuing to be a leading innovator, driving change that impacts all cancer care. And I am confident we will accomplish this because we have the best staff, volunteers, philanthropists, and partners to help make that happen.

Thank you for all you do!

In service,

Anders Kolb, MD
President & CEO
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

[This article](#) was originally published August 30, 2023, by The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. It is republished with permission.