

House and Senate Introduce Bill Aimed at Reducing Health Disparities and Combatting Chronic Disease

The health equity accountability act is designed to improve access to cancer research, prevention, early detection and care.

July 30, 2026 By American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate today introduced legislation aimed at eliminating health disparities. Sponsored by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA) and Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2026 offers a comprehensive policy framework that will help address health inequities that intersect with race and ethnicity as well as geography, immigration status, age, disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, language and socioeconomic status. The bill includes policy solutions that will help bolster cancer research and improve access to cancer prevention, early detection and care.

A statement from Lisa A. Lacasse, president of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) follows:

“Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer. We thank Rep. Ruiz and Sen. Padilla for introducing legislation that includes provisions that will help address cancer disparities and improve health outcomes across all communities.

“The Health Equity Accountability Act expands research, screening and prevention services for cancer and other chronic diseases. The legislation includes provisions that would help remove cost and geographic barriers that keep patients from enrolling and participating in clinical trials. It also includes proven policies to reduce tobacco use, including ensuring coverage of proven tobacco cessation services in Medicaid and private health plans.

“Moreover, the Health Equity Accountability Act focuses on timely collection and publication of demographic data, which is critical to identifying and addressing disparities in cancer prevention, detection and treatment, and expands access to telehealth services, which would bring cancer care to underserved populations, including rural communities.

“We look forward to working with Congress on this and other legislation that will help reduce burden of this disease across all communities.”

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