

How to Save 60,000 Lives From Lung Cancer Each Year

Over 50 cancer groups issue a call to action to increase lung cancer screening. The initiative highlights three steps that'll save lives.

November 2, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

Lung cancer kills nearly 350 people every day in the United States, making it the leading cause of cancer deaths. But increasing lung cancer screenings could change that. To that end, over 50 cancer organizations have endorsed an initiative to increase lung cancer screenings.

Specifically, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo and Moffit Cancer Center in Tampa have joined over 50 cancer organizations, including LUNGevery, in support of an [initiative](#) that spells out three steps to boost testing for lung cancer and lower the incidence of death from the disease.

“We have identified the barriers to lung cancer screening. Now, we need everyone to come together to overcome them. We need a national education and awareness campaign—not just to reach individuals who are eligible for screenings but also the providers and health educators who should be recommending them,” said Mary Reid, PhD, MSPH, a coauthor of a statement about the initiative who is the chief of cancer screening and survivorship at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, in a [Roswell Park news release](#).

The initiative calls for three main actions:

Accelerate Awareness: Implement a comprehensive national education campaign, and leverage tobacco prevention and cessation resources to encourage lung cancer screening;

Improve Access to Lung Cancer Screening: Expand access to quality health care to ensure more individuals at high risk for lung cancer have access to screening and treatment; require Medicaid coverage for guideline-based lung cancer screening, address the challenges associated with prior authorization and physician ordering; and incentivize approaches for equitable access to lung screening;

Regulate Quality: Prioritize quality measures to increase uptake of lung cancer screening among eligible individuals, and invest in comprehensive lung cancer screening sites.

Lung cancer accounts for nearly a quarter of all cancer deaths in the United States. Lung cancer is also most often diagnosed at an advanced stage, when treatment opportunities are limited, which makes [annual screenings](#) and [early detection](#) all the more crucial.

This call to action aligns with the Biden administration's Cancer Moonshot goal to reduce cancer deaths by 50% over the next 25 years. The statement about the initiative outlines a plan to utilize national support to increase cancer [awareness campaigns](#) throughout the country and expand access to quality [health care](#). Its authors suggest requiring that Medicaid cover cancer screening and investing in increased screening sites available to low-income, uninsured or high-risk individuals.

The statement's authors estimate that as many as 60,000 lives could be saved every year if all eligible Americans receive an annual screening.

"Together, we can make real and meaningful reforms to ensure that high-risk individuals across the nation have access to lung cancer screening," the authors wrote.

To read related news from Cancer Health, see "[Biden Supercharges His 2016 Cancer Moonshot Program](#)," "[Black and Latino Churches Launch Anti-Tobacco Youth Initiative](#)," and "[Biden Details Cancer Moonshot Progress and New Initiatives](#)."