

Continued advances made against cancer, sustained research funding needed

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Significant progress has been made against cancer due to the dedicated work of researchers throughout the biomedical research enterprise, according to the American Association for Cancer Research's (AACR) [Cancer Progress Report 2013](#), released today.

Cancer research efforts have spurred the translation of scientific discoveries into new and better ways to prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat cancer. These advances are contributing to the rise in the number of people who are surviving longer and living fuller lives after their cancer diagnoses.

The report is a comprehensive educational tool that illustrates the return on investments in [cancer research](#) and biomedical science by detailing the many ways that the field has continued to make research count for patients in the past year.

According to the third annual report produced by the AACR:

- There have been more than 1 million fewer cancer deaths since 1990 and 1991 for men and women, respectively.
- The number of [cancer survivors](#) continues to increase: the latest data show that 13.7 million U.S. survivors were alive on Jan. 1, 2012.
- In the past year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved 11 [new drugs](#) to treat a variety of cancers, three new uses for previously approved [cancer drugs](#), and three new

imaging technologies.

- Cancer genomics research continues to advance precision medicine: nearly half of the new anticancer drugs approved by the FDA in 2013 target specific defects in cancers.
- More than 100 years of fundamental discoveries in immunology have now led to the development of anticancer immunotherapies that are yielding remarkable, long-lasting patient responses.

The improvements in health care that have significantly reduced the burden of cancer were achieved as a result of the [scientific discoveries](#) made possible by the many decades of investments in basic, translational, and clinical research. These investments come from the federal government, philanthropic individuals and organizations, and the private sector. The federal investments in biomedical research, made primarily through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have been particularly instrumental in building our current scientific knowledge of cancer.

Even with progress, cancer remains a significant problem

The report states that even with the advances in cancer research, it is projected that more than 1.6 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer in 2013, and more than 580,350 Americans will die from one of the more than 200 types of cancer. Global cancer incidence is predicted to increase from 12.8 million new cases in 2008 to 22.2 million in 2030, the report notes.

Compounding the cancer problem is the increasing prevalence of obesity and the continued use of tobacco products by nearly one in every five Americans, which are linked to an elevated risk for eight and 18 different cancers, respectively.

The report also notes that more than 75 percent of cancer diagnoses occur in those aged 55 and older, and as this segment of the population increases in size, we face a future where the number of cancer-related deaths will increase dramatically. As a result, cancer is predicted to soon become the number one disease-related killer of Americans. This trend is being mirrored globally, and it is estimated that in 2030, more than 13 million people worldwide will lose their lives to cancer.

Cancer is an expensive disease; research is a wise investment

Because a growing number of Americans over the age of 65 will live longer, develop cancer, and need treatment in the next 20 years, the AACR warns that if the United States does not increase its investments in the scientific research needed to develop more effective interventions, the increased economic burden will cost lives and harm the economy.

In the United States, the latest estimates from the NIH indicate that the overall economic costs of cancer in 2008 were \$201.5 billion: \$77.4 billion for direct medical costs and \$124 billion for lost productivity due to premature death.

However, the NIH budget has been effectively shrinking for 10 years, the report states. More recently, these effective losses have been compounded by a direct cut of \$1.6 billion (5.1 percent) dealt by sequestration.

"We continue to make research count for patients by saving and enhancing the quality of many lives," said Margaret Foti, Ph.D., M.D. (h.c.), chief executive officer of the AACR. "However, we need more progress, more hope, and more lives saved. We urge Americans to implore Congress to spend wisely now on cancer research and to make it

a priority because it will benefit both patients and the economy. Investing more in cancer research now is an investment in America."

Charles L. Sawyers, M.D., president of the AACR and chair of the Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, continued, "One person will die of cancer every minute of every day this year. This is unacceptable. If we are to accelerate the pace of progress toward our goal, we must continue to pursue a comprehensive understanding of the biology of cancer. This will only be possible if we make funding for cancer research and biomedical science a national priority. This includes investing in the talent, tools, and infrastructure that drive innovation, as well as advancing policies that enable researchers to more completely understand the complexities of cancer and to translate that knowledge for the benefit of patients."

The report highlights the need for efforts to develop new tools, new analytics, new ways of thinking, and new ways of working together to help all stakeholders in the biomedical research enterprise forge ahead to the finish line—to the day when cancer is removed as a major threat to our nation's citizens and to future generations. Realizing this bright future requires that Congress, the administration, and the general public stand firm in their commitment to the conquest of [cancer](#).

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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