

# 1996 to 2020 saw cancer death rates drop across congressional districts

May 16 2023, by Elana Gotkine

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From 1996-2003 to 2012-2020, there was a decrease in cancer death

rates in all congressional districts, according to a study published online May 9 in *Cancer*.

Farhad Islami, M.D., Ph.D., from the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, and colleagues examined trends in cancer [death rates](#) overall and for [lung](#), colorectal, female breast, and [prostate cancer](#) by congressional district using data from the National Center for Health Statistics. Relative changes in age-standardized cancer death rates were estimated from 1996-2003 to 2012-2020.

The researchers found that the overall cancer death rates declined in every congressional district from 1996-2003 to 2012-2020, with a 20 to 45 percent decline among males and a 10 to 40 percent decline among females in most congressional districts. The smallest percent of relative declines was seen in the Midwest and Appalachia, while the declines were largest in the South along the East Coast and southern border. From 1996-2003 to 2012-2020, there was a shift in the highest [cancer](#) deaths rates from congressional districts across the South to districts in the Midwest and central divisions of the South (including Appalachia). In almost all congressional districts, death rates for lung, colorectal, female breast, and [prostate cancers](#) also declined, with some variation noted in relative changes and geographic patterns.

"These findings underscore the need for strengthening existing and implementing new public health policies for broad and equitable application of proven interventions at the local, state, and federal level such as raising tax on tobacco and expansion of Medicaid," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to Pfizer.

**More information:** Farhad Islami et al, Progress in reducing cancer mortality in the United States by congressional district, 1996–2003 to

2012–2020, *Cancer* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/cncr.34808](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.34808)

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