

US advocacy strategy nets a 25% increase in lung cancer research funding

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A unified and concentrated lung cancer advocacy program in the United States resulted in a 25% increase in funding to a U.S.-based lung cancer research program, according to a presentation given at the [International](#)

[Association for the Study of Lung Cancer](#) 2023 World Conference on Lung Cancer in Singapore.

Lung cancer remains a major health concern, with [mortality rates](#) posing a significant challenge both globally and in the United States.

The U.S. Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program/Lung Cancer Research Program (LCRP) was established in 2009 with a [funding](#) level of \$20 million, but had never exceeded its initial budget, and at times, funding was even reduced to as low as \$10.5 million per year. In stark contrast, other cancer research programs, such as [breast cancer](#) and [prostate cancer](#), received substantially higher annual funding.

In January 2022, the Lung Cancer Action Network (LungCAN) took action by forming a dedicated Steering Committee of passionate advocates led by Jill Morningstar, a strong advocate with Capitol Hill experience, along with her husband Al Fitzpayne, a [lung cancer](#) survivor. The committee developed a [strategic plan](#) to increase the LCRP budget, aiming to allocate funding based on the amount needed to support top-rated research proposals from the previous year.

A major obstacle faced by lung cancer advocacy organizations was the lack of a unified web-based platform for contacting members of Congress. To address this challenge, LungCAN, acting as a neutral entity, created a platform that allowed members to direct their constituents to the LungCAN "Call to Action" website without the risk of losing organizational support. Through this platform, the lung cancer advocacy community joined forces, speaking with one voice to advocate for increased lung cancer research funding.

The efforts yielded remarkable results:

- The LCRP received a 25 percent increase in funding, receiving a record-breaking \$25 million, the highest amount the program has ever been awarded.
- The LCRP was the only CDMRP cancer program to receive an increase in funding.
- Strategic social media engagement garnered a remarkable 55,000 combined impressions and 33.3% engagement on Twitter.
- Approximately 1,847 individuals participated in the effort, reaching more than 400 legislators.
- Advocates sent over 5,541 letters to legislators requesting \$60 million for the LCRP through the LungCAN platform, lungcan.org/act.
- Additional emails from advocates through GO2 and LUNGevity platforms exceeded 4,000.
- A House "Dear Colleague" letter received more than 50 co-signers, the highest number ever.
- The campaign garnered support from 80 associations and organizations, growing beyond Congress.

"This historic success highlights the power of unity and collaboration among lung cancer advocacy organizations," said Dusty Donaldson, representing Lung Cancer Action Network. "By joining forces and speaking with one voice, we were able to secure increased funding for lung cancer research, which is essential in advancing our fight against this devastating disease."

Provided by International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer

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