

Statement by GO2 for Lung Cancer on S. 1157, the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act, submitted for the record as part of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee's vote on several bipartisan bills to improve American families' health.

Thursday, January 15, 2025

Thank you to Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Ranking Member Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), distinguished members of the Committee, and to the congressional sponsors whose leadership led to today's important committee markup, which includes S. 1157, *the Women and Lung Cancer Research & Preventive Services Act*. This bipartisan and bicameral legislation was introduced by Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) and Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and in the House by Congressman Brendan Boyle (D-PA) and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), as part of a broader effort to improve the health of American families.

On behalf of GO2 for Lung Cancer, the leading national organization founded by patients and survivors focused solely on transforming survivorship for people impacted by lung cancer, we are honored to submit for the record our strongest endorsement and additional comments on the importance of advancing this vital legislation for those waiting for answers and for the tens of thousands of women who are at risk for or have been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Most people are not aware that lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among women, claiming more lives than breast and cervical cancers combined. It is estimated that one woman dies from lung cancer every nine minutes. From last year to now, an estimated 226,650 new cases of lung cancer are expected, and approximately 124,730 lives will be lost to the disease. This "hidden" women's cancer is the least funded cancer in terms of research dollars per death among all major cancers and remains one of the only cancers for which patients are routinely blamed for their diagnosis.

A growing body of evidence continues to demonstrate that lung cancer develops differently in women and men across many facets of the disease, including risk factors, clinical characteristics, disease progression, and length of survival. For example, a landmark study conducted by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the American Cancer Society (ACS), published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) on May 24, 2018, found that lung cancer incidence rates among White and Hispanic women born after 1965 were higher than among their male counterparts—a reversal not explained by changes in smoking rates. Lung cancer incidence rates among young African American and Asian women also drew closer to those of men, though

they did not exceed them. The NCI-ACS study concluded by calling for additional research to better understand this troubling trend.

GO2 for Lung Cancer has long recognized, through direct experience and advocacy, the unique and devastating impact lung cancer has on women and consistently elevated the need for increased research focused on women and lung cancer.

Beginning in 2010, GO2 partnered with The Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) following the release of the report [Out of the Shadows](#). This study highlighted significant gaps in public awareness of lung cancer's lethality, summarized existing research on sex- and gender-based differences in lung cancer, identified shortcomings in research funding, and recommended concrete steps to reduce the burden of the disease in both women and men.

In 2016, BWH released an updated report, [Lung Cancer: A Women's Health Imperative](#), building on the original "Out of the Shadows" findings. This report sought to further raise awareness and demonstrate the urgent need for a national strategy to address sex- and gender-specific aspects of lung cancer. The report was released at a Congressional briefing on Women and Lung Cancer hosted by GO2 for Lung Cancer (formerly known as the Lung Cancer Alliance), in coordination with the Congressional Lung Cancer Caucus. These efforts formed the foundation of the bipartisan, bicameral *Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act*, first introduced in 2016 and reintroduced in 2025.

Through S. 1157, the *Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act*, we have an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the genetic, hormonal, behavioral, and environmental factors that contribute to this lethal disease, as well as the differences in incidence, prevalence, survivability, and treatment response between women and men.

With increased basic and clinical research, we can better inform the public about these critical differences, support the development of a national strategy to accelerate preventive lung cancer screening services for women, and help bridge persistent gaps in lung cancer innovation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of people living with lung cancer. It was encouraging to see the companion bill, H.R. 2319, successfully advance through the House Energy and Commerce Committee. We are hopeful that S. 1157 will pass the HELP Committee, representing a significant step toward passage in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

As we continue to build on the momentum from the previous Congress, we share a collective obligation to serve the public, and we stand ready to assist the Committee and the bill sponsors in advancing this legislation during the 119th Congress. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Elridge Proctor, MPA (eproctor@go2.org), Senior Director of Government Affairs.

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