



Confronting
Lung Cancer
Starts Here

Statement by Laurie Fenton Ambrose, President & CEO, GO2 for Lung Cancer on H.R. 4534, Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2023 as part of the Legislative Proposals to Support Patients and Caregivers Hearing.

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Submitted for the record to the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Subcommittee on Health

Thank you Committee Chair McMorris Rodgers and Subcommittee Chair Guthrie distinguished members and all who have contributed to the discussions that led to holding today's important hearing that includes H.R. 4535, The Women and Lung Cancer Research & Preventive Services Act of 2023, introduced in the House by Congressman Brendan Boyle (D-PA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), on legislative proposals to support patients and caregivers.

On behalf of GO2 for Lung Cancer, the leading national lung cancer organization founded by patients, survivors, and caregivers, we are proud to provide for the record our strongest endorsement of H.R. 4535 and to offer additional comments on the importance of advancing this vital legislation – now – 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 in women – more than breast and cervical cancers combined. It is now estimated that every day 162 women die from the disease – one woman every 8.9 minutes. It is also estimated that 234,580 new cases of lung cancer are expected this year, and an estimated 125,070 lives will be lost to the disease. This “hidden” women’s cancer is the least funded cancer, in terms of research dollars per death, of all the major cancers and one of the only cancers where patients are routinely blamed as responsible for their condition.

Reports continue to document how lung cancer develops differently in women and men within many facets of the disease including risk factors, clinical characteristics, progression, and length of survival.

For example, several years ago, a significant study by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the American Cancer Society (ACS) published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) on May 24, 2018, indicated that the incidence rates of lung cancer among White and Hispanic women born after 1965 are now higher than among their male counterparts, a reversal not correlated to changes in their smoking rates. The lung cancer incidence rates among young African American and Asian women were closer but do not yet exceed those

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of their male counterparts. This NCI-ACS study concluded by calling for more research into this disturbing precedent.

GO2 has witnessed lung cancer's unique and devastating impact on women. We placed an early spotlight on the need for increased research into 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) after they released a study, "[Out of the Shadows](#)," which highlights the gaps in current knowledge about lung cancer's lethality, summarizes existing research on sex and gender differences in lung cancer, identifies shortcomings in current research funding that would provide better understanding of these biological differences, and recommends steps to reduce the burden of this disease in women and men.

In 2016, BWH released an updated report, "[Lung Cancer: A Women's Health Imperative](#)," as a follow-up to bring lung cancer in women "Out of the Shadows." This report brought even greater awareness of the need for a national strategy to address the study of sex- and gender-specific aspects of the disease. The report was released at a Congressional briefing on Women and Lung Cancer hosted by the Lung Cancer Alliance (now known as GO2 for Lung Cancer) in coordination with the Congressional Lung Cancer Caucus and ultimately became the basis of the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act, first introduced in 2016 and re-introduced in 2023.

It is our hope through H.R. 4534, the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2023, we will gain a better understanding of the roles that genetic, hormonal, behavioral, and environmental factors play in this lethal disease, uncover differences in incidence, prevalence, and survivability to identify treatment responses between men and women.

Increasing basic and clinical research knowledge of the disease will make the public aware of the vital need to create a national strategy that accelerates implementing lung cancer screening for women and bridge the gaps in lung cancer innovations.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of people living with lung cancer. We share the obligation to serve the public and we stand ready to assist the committee and our bill sponsors to advance this legislation to passage, in this session of the 118th Congress.

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