

*THE CONGRESSIONAL CANCER PROMISE
2006-2007*

Cancer strikes one out of two men and one out of three women, killing 1,500 people every day. Each cancer death, on average, steals 15 years of life. But today, people are increasingly living with cancer rather than dying from it—a testament to our nation’s investment in biomedical research, cancer prevention, early detection and care.

Since 1991, the death rate due to cancer has actually declined. Now more than 10 million Americans are living with a history of cancer. In fact, cancer is one of the most preventable and increasingly curable life-threatening diseases if detected early. Simply applying what we now know about prevention and early detection could cut cancer deaths in half, and save billions of dollars.

Many stakeholders in the cancer fight are actively doing their part to defeat this disease, but it cannot be done without the sustained leadership and strong commitment of government. In 2005, 92 Senators and 280 Members of Congress signed a letter to the President in support of the national challenge goal of eliminating suffering and death due to cancer by the year 2015. While the 2015 goal is not one that can be reached with certainty, it is now possible to envision such a goal because our past commitment to cancer research and programs has poised us to greatly accelerate progress toward a time when people live with cancer rather than die from it.

The conquest of this disease is within our grasp if we adopt bold new policies and make the investments necessary. The opportunities to beat this disease demand our focused attention and there are steps we can take to jumpstart our progress toward the 2015 goal. Our nation’s current health care system is not up to this challenge. If we are to ultimately conquer cancer our system must ensure that all Americans have access to high quality care.

In doing my part toward this end, I promise to:

Make health system reform a priority

- ✓ Urge my party’s leaders to commit to comprehensive, bipartisan solutions.
- ✓ Educate myself about the gaps in the current system as it impacts our fight against cancer.
- ✓ Support meaningful reform.

Elevate prevention, early detection and survivorship

- ✓ Increase colorectal and breast cancer screening rates by removing Medicare co-pays and extending the Welcome to Medicare visit time limit from six months to one year.
- ✓ Help smokers quit and reduce their risks for lung cancer by expanding comprehensive smoking cessation coverage in Medicaid.
- ✓ Ensure that states have the resources to implement their cancer control plans with a focus on the full continuum of cancer care, including the needs of survivors.

Increase our commitment to research

- ✓ Sustain past progress and continued modernization of cancer research by providing annual funding for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) that at least keeps pace with medical inflation.

Expand access to care

- ✓ Increase preventive health services and improve health outcomes, by providing the resources necessary to implement the Patient Navigator Act signed into law in 2005.
- ✓ Ensure that all eligible women have access to life-saving screenings by reauthorizing and increasing funding for the CDC’s National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.
- ✓ Increase colorectal cancer screening rates for the underserved by authorizing a colorectal cancer early detection and treatment demonstration program to serve at least 2 million low-income, uninsured individuals ages 50-64.

Signed: _____

Date: _____