



Advancing Research. Improving Lives.™



July 18, 2025

Dear Members of Congress:

In the United States today, one of every two men and one of every three women will hear the words “you have cancer”. Those three simple words are life changing for over 2 million Americans each year. Cancer is the number two cause of death in the US, killing more than 600,000 people annually. Recognizing the impact of cancer on our nation, Congress established the National Cancer Institute (NCI) through the National Cancer Act of 1937, and with almost 90 years of Congress’ unwavering support, the NCI has been the world leader in research efforts and success against cancer. Today, nearly 70% of Americans will be cured of their cancer, thanks in large part to the decades of research supported by the NCI.

For decades, the NCI has supported the development of the clinical trials infrastructure so important in moving cancer-fighting ideas from the laboratory bench to the patient’s bedside. In 2014, the NCI created the National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN), bringing together the resources of the NCI, University and Foundation research centers, pharmaceutical companies, and the Cooperative Groups, consisting of over 2200 clinical trial sites to create the largest and highest impact cancer clinical trials alliance in the world. The NCTN plays an indispensable role in advancing cancer research and improving patient outcomes through publicly funded, independent, high-quality, peer-reviewed clinical trials. Today, it is estimated that over **500,000 patients** across the U.S. are currently receiving active therapy or follow-up care through NCTN research. A reduction in NCI funding and NCI personnel that support the NCTN would directly jeopardize the care of these patients, cutting off access to lifesaving treatments, undermining follow-up monitoring, and introducing unacceptable delays in critical data analysis that informs their future care.

On behalf of the thousands of researchers and physicians within our organizations, we are advocating for the continued support of the NCTN. More importantly, we are advocating for the millions of Americans who are alive today because of its efforts. The impact of NCTN trials on advancing evidence-based care and establishing new standard of care in cancer is unparalleled. A study by Unger and colleagues, involving 162 NCTN treatment trials with over 100,000 participants, found that 88% of these trials influenced treatment guidelines.¹ These trials have generated approximately *14.2 million additional life-years* for patients through 2020, with projections indicating a potential gain of 24.1 million life-years by 2030. This remarkable

achievement represents an incredible value at \$326 per life-year gained, a cost-effectiveness figure that is unmatched by pharmaceutical companies or other academic investigators.

Having the NCTN ensures that cancer clinical trials are accessible to patients in communities throughout the United States (public, private, academic, and community practices), including both urban and rural areas. They are also available to those across the entire age spectrum. This broad reach is essential for improving care, especially for patients who are often excluded from industry-sponsored oncology studies, due to restricted access or co-existing health conditions. Moreover, many NCTN trials target certain patient populations that are often ignored by pharma studies, including children, adolescents, and young adults. Most of patients enrolled in the NCTN trials derive from the U.S., while industry-sponsored trials almost always have a significant percentage of international enrollees; thus, practice changing results from NCTN trials are likely more relevant to U.S. patients with cancer.

Examples of clinical questions addressed by the NCTN trials include:

- Investigating new indications for both novel and approved drugs
- Developing innovative strategies for cancer screening and prevention
- Enhancing multimodal (e.g., chemotherapy plus radiation) treatment approaches
- De-escalating treatment regimens, to decrease side-effects.
- Validating biomarkers, to individualize therapy
- Integrating specific supportive care measures, to enhance quality of life
- Reducing financial toxicity and enhancing access for rural patients
- Developing treatment approaches for children and adolescents

In addition to saving the lives of countless patients, policymakers should be made aware of the contributions of our research to local economies. A guide to this is provided by NIH: In fiscal year 2023, every \$1 of NIH funding generated approximately \$2.46 of economic activity. This well-recognized multiplier creates employment and is a key factor behind the extensive availability of cutting-edge, practice changing trials.

Built upon decades of congressional support, the NCTN is a unique and irreplaceable national resource. It delivers high-quality, practice-changing, cancer research involving interventions that aim to improve outcomes for all Americans, with unparalleled low cost and high impact return on investment. Sustained and strengthened federal support for the NCTN is not just an investment in research—it is a commitment to providing high-value, reliable, accessible, and life-saving care for all Americans.

Thank you for considering this important matter. We look forward to your support for the NCTN and its invaluable contributions to cancer research and patient care.

Sincerely,

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1. Unger, J.M., LeBlanc, M., George, S., Wolmark, N., Curran, W.J., Jr., O'Dwyer, P.J., Schnall, M.D., Mannel, R.S., Mandrekar, S.J., Gray, R.J., Zhao, F., Bah, M., Vaidya, R. & Blanke, C.D. Population, Clinical, and Scientific Impact of National Cancer Institute's National Clinical Trials Network Treatment Studies. *J Clin Oncol* **41**, 2020-2028 (2023).PMC10082246