



AACR-AACI Hill Day 2025
Suggested Meeting Script with Members of Congress and Staff

Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon] and thank you for meeting with us today.

My name is [name], and I serve as [title] at [institution]. I'm here on behalf of the American Association for Cancer Research and the Association of American Cancer Institutes, along with colleagues from across the country. We represent cancer centers, researchers, clinicians, patients, and survivors who are united by a shared mission—to advance cancer research and ensure that patients have access to the most effective care.

[If colleagues are present: "I'd like to briefly let my colleagues introduce themselves and share where they're from."]

A Defining Moment for Cancer Research

Cancer research has long been a bipartisan success story. Because Congress chose to invest, more than 18 million Americans are alive today after a cancer diagnosis. That progress reflects a 34 percent drop in the cancer death rate since 1991. It has brought hope to families in every community, and it would not have been possible without sustained bipartisan leadership.

Today, that progress is in jeopardy.

The President's FY 2026 budget proposes cutting NIH by nearly 40 percent. More than 770 NIH grants have already been canceled, cutting off support for researchers midstream. Clinical trials are being called off before they begin. Labs are losing funding, and early-career scientists are walking away. Patients who were hoping to enroll in studies are being left with no options and no answers.

While we recognize the serious fiscal constraints facing Congress, cancer is not slowing down. It will take more than 600,000 lives this year. For many patients, there are still no effective treatments. Delaying research means delaying the next breakthrough. And for some, it means losing their only chance.

Congress has always led the way. That leadership has driven discovery, expanded access, and made the United States the world leader in cancer research. We are asking you to protect that progress and the people who are depending on it.

What We're Asking

To protect progress and ensure patients are not left behind, we urge Congress to:

- **Provide at least \$51.3 billion for NIH in FY 2026**
This level is needed to keep pace with biomedical inflation and fund the most promising, peer-reviewed research across all disease areas. Without it, critical studies will be delayed or canceled, and patients waiting for answers will be left with fewer options.
- **Provide at least \$7.934 billion for the National Cancer Institute**
NCI funding supports clinical trials, pediatric research, early detection, and the national network of cancer centers that care for patients in every region of the country. These investments drive lifesaving discoveries and ensure that new treatments reach the people who need them most.

These investments keep lifesaving research moving forward, protect clinical trials, and ensure patients are not left behind. They support jobs, strengthen communities, and help the United States remain a global leader in science.

Why It Matters

At a time when research is being slowed, trials are being delayed, and patients are running out of time, sharing your experience is essential. Your perspective can clarify what is being lost and what is at risk if support for cancer research continues to decline. Personal stories convey the urgency and human impact of these decisions in ways that data alone cannot.

A few examples to guide you:

- “Our center has experienced delays in launching a clinical trial due to federal funding uncertainty. Patients who were waiting to participate were told the study could not move forward as planned.”
- “As an early-career scientist, I have seen opportunities shrink and uncertainty grow. Many of my peers are reconsidering whether they can stay in this field.”
- “As a patient advocate, I know individuals whose lives were changed because they had access to a clinical trial made possible through NIH support. Without continued federal investment, those opportunities will become fewer and fewer.”

Closing

The extraordinary progress we have made against cancer is the result of decades of bipartisan commitment to medical research. That investment has built a scientific enterprise that is stronger and more promising than ever before. But this legacy is now at risk. Without continued support, we will not only lose momentum, we will also lose the opportunity to deliver the next generation of breakthroughs to the patients who need them most.

The decisions Congress makes this year will shape what is possible—not only for science, but for every patient and family still waiting for answers. We urge you to stand with us and protect the future of cancer research.

Thank you for your time and your leadership. We would be happy to answer any questions.