



# State Chair Town Hall

January 21, 2026

Commission on Cancer

# CoC State Chair Town Hall

**Maria Castaldi, MD, FACS**

Chair

Committee on Cancer Liaison



**Quan Ly, MD, FACS**

Vice-Chair

Committee on Cancer Liaison



# CoC Update

- Monthly CLP and Accreditation Site Visit Lists
- Post Town Hall Communications
- 2026 State Chair Activity Report
  - Deadline: February 9
- 2026 CoC Research Paper Competition
  - Deadline for Submissions: June 8
- 2026 Quality, Safety & Cancer Conference
  - July 30-August 2 in Orlando, FL



# State Chair Town Hall

## State Chair Engagement with Advocacy

### **James McLoughlin, MD, FACS**

TN State Chair and CoC Advocacy Committee Chair

### **Catherine Hendricks**

Manager, State Affairs, Advocacy & Health Policy, American College of Surgeons

### **Matthew Brown**

Congressional Lobbyist, Advocacy & Health Policy, American College of Surgeons

### **Carter Steger**

Vice President, State and Local Campaigns, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



# State Affairs

Cancer Advocacy

# ACS State Affairs

## Legislative Tracking Cancer Priorities

- Biomarker
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Chemo and proton therapy
- Colorectal cancer
- Lung cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Pharmacogenomic testing
- Prior Authorization
- Prostate cancer
- Step-therapy
- Sunscreen in schools

# ACS State Affairs

## Legislative Tracking Cancer Priorities

In 2025, the ACS State Affairs team tracked

- 583 cancer bills
  - 106 were enacted
- Provided legislative reports to the monthly Commission on Cancer meetings
- Sent letters of support for cancer legislation in the states
  - Worked with the dermatology coalition advocating to allow school students to use sunscreen and wear sun protective clothing in their schools.

# ACS State Affairs

## What can we do for You?

- Track cancer legislation in your state
- Provide information handouts for legislative visits
- Create action alerts using SurgeonsVoice to easily email legislators about legislation you want to support or oppose
- Offer grant money to support an advocacy day or hire a lobbyist



# ACS State Affairs

## Why Engage in State Advocacy?

### Surgeons:

- **You** are the experts on surgery
- **You** know what is best for patients and the medical profession
- **You** see the changing trends and challenges in health care
- **You** bring credibility on health care issues

**Policymakers want and need to hear from you!**



# ACS State Affairs

## State Advocacy Checklist

- Are you registered to vote?
  - Your vote is more important to a legislator than any amount of money
    - ❖ A legislator will check to see if you are registered and if you vote consistently
- Do you give to a PAC?
  - It doesn't buy a vote – it opens a door
  - Shows the legislator you are invested

# ACS State Affairs

## State Advocacy Checklist

### Reach out to your legislator

- Look up your legislator using your state's legislative website
- Visit the legislator's website
- Review the information on their website to identify your representative's areas of interest
- Call or send an email their office to introduce yourself, ask for meeting – make sure to mention you are a constituent
  - If the legislator is not available, ask for the legislative aide responsible for health care issues

# Questions?

Catherine Hendricks

Manager, State Affairs

[chendricks@facs.org](mailto:chendricks@facs.org)

# **COC Advocacy Committee**

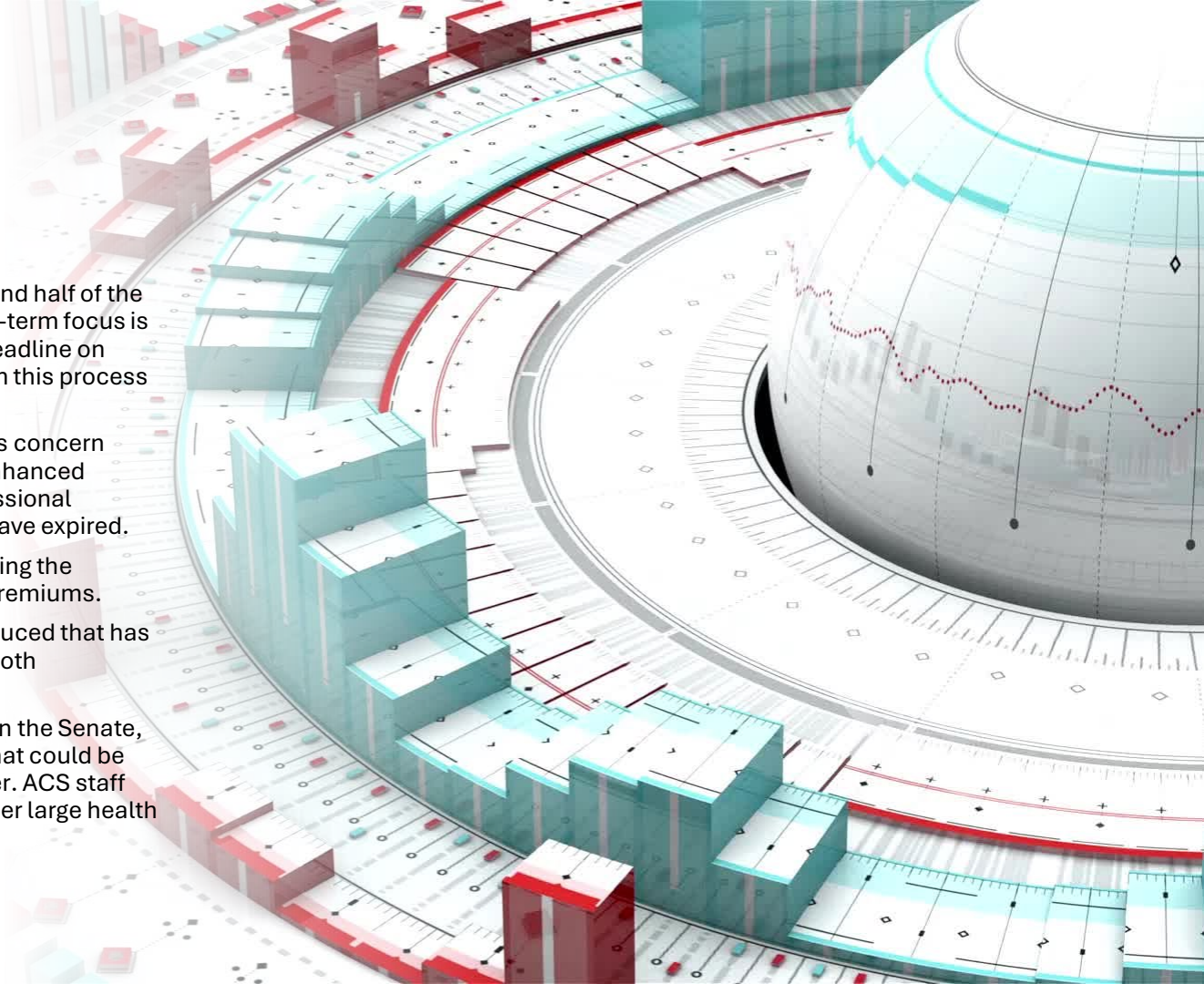
# COC Advocacy Committee Meetings

## Agenda:

- 1) Overview of Active Healthcare Initiatives – Primarily Cancer Specific
- 2) Review Issues and Progress at the State Level – Catherine Hendricks
  - Access
  - Screening
  - Biomarkers
  - Co-pays/additional fees
  - Step therapy/Fail first
  - Cancer specific legislation
  - Celebrate successes
  - Lessons learned on the journey
- 3) Discuss Ongoing Federal Level Issues and Member Engagement – Matthew Brown
  - Ongoing funding challenges – HHS/NIH/NCI
  - Opportunities to engage with Advocacy
  - Specific bills to follow and support

# Current Landscape

- Congress has advanced into the second half of the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. The immediate/short-term focus is the upcoming Government funding deadline on January 30, 2026. More information on this process in the coming slides.
- At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> session there was concern regarding the expiration of the ACA enhanced premium tax credits. With no Congressional agreement in place these subsidies have expired.
  - These credits were enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic to lower premiums.
  - No package has yet been introduced that has been able to advance through both chambers.
- Over the last few weeks, particularly in the Senate, there has been rumor of a new deal that could be accepted by a majority of the chamber. ACS staff are continuing to monitor this and other large health packages.



# Federal Government Funding

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- In late 2025, Congress passed a package that funded several departments until September 2026.
  - Remaining departments, including HHS, were only funded through a continuing resolution until January 30, 2026.
- Last week, the House of Representatives advanced a “minibus” package of bills that would provide funding through September for the departments of energy, commerce, interior and justice.
  - Funding for HHS is still under consideration at this time.



# Federal Government Funding

- HHS agencies (NIH/NCI, CDC, etc.) are currently funded at FY2025 discretionary levels.
  - The ACS Federal Team is continuing to highlight the need for continued funding for cancer research and care.
- No clear indication yet as to what the exact level of funding will be.
- At this point it would appear likely that a short-term continuing resolution may be used to avoid a government shutdown. More will be known in the coming days.

# Proposed HHS Funding for 2026

Program	FY25	ACS Request	House Version	Senate Version
NIH	\$48.3b	\$51.3b	\$46.9b	\$47.2b
NCI	\$7.22b	\$7.93b	\$7.27b	\$7.37b
ARPA-H	\$1.5b	\$1.5b	\$945m	\$1.5 b
CDC Cancer Prevention		\$492.9m	\$417.5 m	\$410.05m

# Why Engage in Advocacy?

Health care policy is constantly changing, with or without input from surgeons

- **Surgeons:**
  - Are the experts on surgery
  - Know what is best for patients and the medical profession
  - See the changing trends and challenges in health care
  - Bring credibility on health care issues

**Policymakers want to hear from you!**



# Congressional Accountability

Elected officials are primarily motivated by two things:

- **Constituents:** The people who vote for and communicate with them

SurgeonsVoice

- **Supporters:** Individuals and organizations who invest in their campaigns

SurgeonsPAC

# ACS Advocacy Activities

## Grassroots advocacy comes in many forms

- Attend the annual ACS Leadership and Advocacy Summit
- Utilize SurgeonsVoice online tools and resources available to surgeon advocates
- **Regularly partake in SurgeonsVoice grassroots “Calls to Action”**
- Participate in advocacy efforts at home
- Attend your chapter’s State Lobby Day
- Follow and/or engage in social media activity (@SurgeonsVoice on X)
- Regularly discuss local health policy issues/concerns with DAHP staff

The screenshot displays the SurgeonsVoice Advocacy Center website. The top navigation bar includes the SurgeonsVoice logo and links for Stop Medicare Payment Cuts, Trauma Advocacy, Pediatric Advocacy, My Officials, and a Sign Up button. Below the navigation bar, a welcome message reads "Welcome to the SurgeonsVoice Advocacy Center!". The main content area features two prominent "Calls to Action" boxes. The first box, titled "Stabilize the Medicare Physician Payment System!", describes the challenges of a budget-neutral payment system and includes a "Write" button. The second box, titled "Support ACS Priorities in the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act", explains the purpose of the PAHPA and also includes a "Write" button. On the right side of the page, there is a section titled "Follow @SurgeonsVoice on Twitter" with a "Follow on Twitter" button. Below this, a tweet from @SurgeonsVoice is displayed, mentioning the American College of Surgeons and the upcoming Leadership & Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC, with a deadline to reserve a hotel room on March 14. The tweet includes a photo of the U.S. Capitol dome and the website facs.org.

SurgeonsVoice

Stop Medicare Payment Cuts Trauma Advocacy Pediatric Advocacy My Officials More Sign Up

Welcome to the SurgeonsVoice Advocacy Center!

**Stabilize the Medicare Physician Payment System!**

Without meaningful changes to address the challenges of a budget-neutral payment system or providing adjustments to account for the increased cost of staff, office space, and other resources, surgeons will find it increasingly difficult to continue to improve care and outcomes.

Write

**Support ACS Priorities in the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act**

The Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) was created to improve the nation's response to public health and medical emergencies.

Write

Follow @SurgeonsVoice on Twitter

Tweets from @SurgeonsVoice Follow on Twitter

SurgeonsVoice reposted

ACS American College of Sur... @AmCollSurg... · Mar 13

If you're planning to attend this year's Leadership & Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC, the deadline to reserve a hotel room is tomorrow, March 14.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to make your voice heard on Capitol Hill!

facs.org

# Advocacy for Cancer Research Funding



## Cancer Research and Prevention Funding Requests

131 actions taken

69 needed to reach next goal

### Background:

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) has been strong advocates in the fight against cancer and securing additional cancer research and prevention funding. Past congressional support for federally funded cancer research has been the foundation for progress made in the battle against this disease. The ACS strongly supports the goal of maintaining and enhancing funding of these programs in order to build upon the momentum gained throughout the last few years.

Specifically, the ACS supports building upon medical breakthroughs and treatment therapies that provide relief to millions of cancer patients. ACS supports the following funding requests for the CDC, NIH, NCI, and ARPA-H.

For FY 2026, the ACS urge Congress to support the following funding recommendations:

# ACS CAN State 2026 Legislative Priorities

**Carter Steger, VP State and  
Local Campaigns**



**January 21, 2026**

# The State of Cancer

American Cancer Society Releases  
*Cancer Facts & Figures 2026*



**70% of people  
are surviving**

at least five years after  
a cancer diagnosis.  
(2015-2021)



**More people  
are living longer  
after diagnosis**

of myeloma, liver, lung,  
and rectal cancer.  
(since the mid-1990s)



**4.8 million  
lives saved**

as a result of a 34%  
decline in the cancer  
death rate since its  
peak in 1991.  
(1991-2023)



**Rates are  
increasing  
for many  
common  
cancers**

including breast,  
prostate, liver and  
melanoma (female),  
oral cavity, pancreas,  
and uterine.

Read the full report: [cancer.org/statistics-2026](https://cancer.org/statistics-2026)



# Impact of Federal action on 2026 Policy Priorities

- 1 **HR 1 impact on Medicaid programs**
- 2 **State tobacco prevention funding uncertainty**
- 3 **Changes in vaccine schedules and ACIP members**
- 4 **Access to affordable health insurance coverage**
- 5 **Shifts to states causing state budget strain**

# How to join us in state and federal advocacy priorities – WE NEED YOU!



- Go to <https://www.fightcancer.org/> and sign up to get alerts from us on our key campaign work.
- Feel free to reach out to me, Carter Steger at [carter.steger@cancer.org](mailto:carter.steger@cancer.org) and I will put you in touch with ACS CAN state staff.

# Thank You

# State Chair Town Hall

## Open Forum

# State Chair Town Hall

# Thank you!

Questions?  
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