



June 7, 2021

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
United States Senate  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brendan Boyle  
United States House of Representatives  
1133 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick  
United States House of Representatives  
1722 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Rubio, Senator Feinstein, Representative Boyle and Representative Fitzpatrick:

The American Lung Association writes to express our support for the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2021 (S.699 and H.R.1800). The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary public health association in the United States, representing the millions of Americans living with lung diseases, including lung cancer, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pulmonary fibrosis. The Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through research, education and advocacy.

About every two and a half minutes, someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with lung cancer, and 4 in 5 of those diagnosed will ultimately die from the disease.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco use is the leading risk factor for lung cancer, accounting for 80 to 90% of cases, followed by radon exposure.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, though, anyone can get lung cancer.

Unfortunately, the impact of lung cancer in the United States is rife with disparities. People of color who are diagnosed with lung cancer face worse outcomes compared to white people because they are less likely to be diagnosed early, less likely to receive surgical treatment, and more likely to not receive any treatment.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, for those under 55, lung cancer rates are higher among women than men.<sup>4</sup>

In the last 43 years, the rate of new lung cancer cases has fallen 38% among men while increasing 84% among women. The rate of new lung cancer cases among women has decreased 16% since its peak in 2005, but more progress is needed. For a woman, the risk of developing lung cancer in her lifetime is approximately 1 in 17. Further, close to half of all women diagnosed with lung cancer will not even survive one year.<sup>5</sup>

The Lung Association is committed to defeating lung cancer. As an organization, we are working to increase access to vital screening that can enable greater survival rates through earlier detection of the disease, enhance risk reduction efforts through radon mitigation and tobacco cessation, and fund breakthrough research, to name a few. We cannot do this alone, however. While the Lung Association is deeply appreciative of Congress' existing efforts to combat lung cancer, such as through the funding of cancer research at the National Institutes of Health and risk reduction activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Environmental Protection Agency, the individuals impacted by lung cancer stand to

benefit immensely from additional investment, particularly with regard to the rampant disparities associated with this cruel disease.

As a result, we are grateful for the introduction of the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2021. By requiring an interagency review of the status of and potential opportunities surrounding research on women and lung cancer, access to lung cancer preventive services and strategic public awareness and education campaigns on lung cancer, this bill would take the nation a step closer to tackling disparities and putting an end to lung cancer once and for all.

Thank you for your work to champion this issue. The American Lung Association looks forward to working with you to ensure the successful enactment of this key legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold P. Wimmer  
National President and CEO

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<sup>1</sup> Siegel RL, Miller KD, Jemal A. Cancer Statistics, 2021. *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> American Lung Association. 2021. State of Lung Cancer Report. <https://www.lung.org/research/state-of-lung-cancer/key-findings>

<sup>3</sup> American Lung Association. 2021. State of Lung Cancer Report. <https://www.lung.org/research/state-of-lung-cancer/racial-and-ethnic-disparities>

<sup>4</sup> Jemal A, et al. Higher Lung Cancer Incidence in Young Women Than Young Men in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2018; 378(21):1999-2009.

<sup>5</sup> U.S National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute: SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2017.