

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Indicators

In order to evaluate the extent to which the long-term goals of the National Action Plan are reached, establishing and monitoring measures to demonstrate progress toward obtaining those goals are critical. Developing indicators provides a benchmark to gauge success and identify movement toward cancer survivorship objectives. Important indicators to measure include those related to process, such as whether initiatives are being delivered as planned, and outcomes, such as if the survivor's life is improving. Eventually, preliminary indicators can be made into measurable objectives as part of a comprehensive evaluation plan. Examples of some indicators that organizations or individuals could use for activities summarized in this Plan might include the following:

Surveillance and Applied Research

- Increase the number of cancer registries that are able to follow cancer survivors over time.
- Create a standardized set of items for the collection and analysis of cancer survivorship data, including quality of life, at the national level.
- Assess the feasibility of obtaining population-based cancer survivorship data using cancer registries and other data sources.
- Develop research initiatives to quantify health concerns of cancer survivors.
- Increase the number of collaborative efforts between academic researchers and state health departments related to cancer survivors.
- Determine the extent to which these collaborative efforts result in useful and applicable findings.

Communication, Education, and Training

- Increase health care professionals' and the general public's knowledge of the burden of cancer survivorship and issues faced by survivors.
- Increase the amount of media time devoted to cancer survivorship compared with other health issues.
- Increase the number of trainings on cancer survivorship for health professionals and para-professionals.

Programs, Policies, and Infrastructure

- Increase programmatic resources for cancer survivorship over a period of 5 years, and assess trends in funding levels across private and public sector programs.
- Increase the number of state cancer plans and CCC Programs with cancer survivorship components.
- Track the number of policies related to cancer survivorship at the local, state, and national level.
- Increase the number of health insurance carriers providing for post-treatment and long-term follow-up services, including specialty care, for cancer survivors.

Access to Quality Care and Services

- Increase the number of survivors receiving pain control and other support services throughout each stage of cancer survivorship, from diagnosis through end-of-life.
- Increase research to evaluate the effectiveness of patient navigation systems on improving cancer survivors' quality of life and disseminate those results to the public health community.
- Continue to improve the 5-year survival rates for all cancers.

B. Conclusion

With one-third of Americans estimated to be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, the individual and societal burden of cancer is clear. A National Action Plan for Cancer Survivorship: Advancing Public Health Strategies describes a variety of proven public health interventions as well as new strategies aimed to improve the quality of life for cancer survivors, their families, friends, and caregivers. By using the National Action Plan as a guide as well as a call to action, the public health community can initiate and sustain changes that will lead to improved quality of life among the millions of people living with, through, and beyond cancer. The ambitious approaches outlined in this National Action Plan will be most feasible if public health organizations and individuals pursue the strategies that are most applicable to their mission. Next steps for implementing this National Action Plan will be for organizations to prioritize the needs they can address and effectively implement initiatives so that progress over the next 5 years in advancing cancer survivorship within the realm of public health can be realized.

Liz, Cancer Survivor



“Survivorship is life.”