The American Cancer Society’s Research Program

Celebrating 61 Years of Hope, Progress, and Answers

Uniqueness of the Research Program

- The American Cancer Society concentrates on beginning researchers and novel research opportunities.
- The American Cancer Society provides 20-25% of all cancer research funding to beginning researchers.
- American Cancer Society research targets areas of special need, such as cancer in the poor and underserved.
- American Cancer Society grantees are selected by stringent peer review—two panels of outside volunteer experts select the best science.
- American Cancer Society Peer Review Committees include "stakeholders," individuals with a personal interest in cancer.
- During the last 61 years, nearly 20,000 researchers have received grants from the American Cancer Society.
- 42 American Cancer Society researchers have gone on to win the Nobel Prize, the highest accolade of scientific achievement.

The American Cancer Society has been involved in many of the major cancer research breakthroughs of the century including:

- Cure for childhood leukemia with combination chemotherapy
- Pap smear to detect cervical cancer
- Mammography to screen for breast cancer
- Lumpectomy + radiation for treatment of breast cancer
- PSA test for prostate cancer screening
- 5-FU (chemotherapy) for colon cancer
- Identification of smoking as cause of lung cancer
- Creation of recombinant DNA and gene cloning
- Discovery of cancer-causing oncogenes and tumor suppressor genes
- Discovery of genes for inherited breast and colon cancer
- Use of tamoxifen to reduce risk of second or first breast cancer
- Development of monoclonal antibodies to treat breast cancer (Herceptin) and lymphoma (Rituxan)
Contemporary cancer research is poised to make great advances in the coming decade in the areas of:

- Drugs designed to attack cancer at its genetic roots, e.g., anti-telomerase, pro-apoptosis, anti-angiogenesis
- Immunotherapy—therapeutic vaccines and monoclonal antibodies
- Chemoprevention
- Gene therapy
- Gene-environment interactions

Research Funding Facts

- The American Cancer Society Research Program began with $1 million in 1946, when the Federal Government was spending only $750.00 on cancer programs.
- Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has spent more than $3 billion on research.
- The American Cancer Society dedicates more money to cancer research than any other private, not-for-profit, non-government-funding organization of cancer research in the United States.
- The American Cancer Society spends approximately $120 million each year on cancer research.
- 95% of the Research budget goes directly to research, with 5% for operating costs.
- 7% of the Research dollars fund the in-house Epidemiology and Surveillance Research Cancer, which investigates cancer risk factors and prevention strategies.
- 3% funds the in-house Behavioral Research Center, which concentrates on the needs of cancer survivors across the nation, and translating scientifically valid prevention interventions into practice.
- 85% of American Cancer Society Research dollars go to researchers and health care professionals working in institutions all across the country.
- As of January 1, 2007, the American Cancer Society is supporting 854 current multi-year grants totaling over $431 million.
- Currently, the American Cancer Society is funding 52 research grants throughout Pennsylvania, representing an investment of almost $30 million.