



Memorandum

TO• President-elect Barack Obama
FROM• Lance Armstrong Foundation
DATE• December 30, 2008
RE• Cancer Policy Recommendations

The Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) applauds the commitments made in the *Obama-Biden Plan to Combat Cancer* and strongly supports the President-elect's commitment to reform the healthcare system. We believe that the prevention, detection and treatment of cancer can provide a good model for comprehensive healthcare reform. Against the backdrop of what could be the most critical year in health reform in decades, the following memorandum outlines select policies that offer opportunities for immediate and sustained progress and success in the fight against cancer. These views begin with a list of short term actions that, if taken, can quickly improve the lives of people affected by cancer in this country and are followed by a longer term research and public health recommendations.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

The LAF encourages the Obama administration to take action on the following items which would have the potential to immediately improve the lives of people affected by cancer:

- Work with Congress to increase funding for cancer research and programs and reverse the trend of stagnant federal funding either through the FY2010 budget process or stimulus legislation.
- Issue an executive order that revokes the prohibition on federal funding for research involving embryonic stem cell lines derived prior to August 9, 2001 and revokes any other existing executive order or presidential policy which restricts federal funding of embryonic stem cell research.
- Send the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to the Senate for ratification. The FCTC requires countries that have ratified it to implement scientifically proven measures to reduce tobacco use. 168 countries have signed the treaty and 161 have ratified it. The U.S. can become a leader in global tobacco control by ratifying and implementing the FCTC.
- Sign the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act into law. Empowering the FDA to make decisions about tobacco products would help reduce the disease burden of tobacco.
- Sign the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill into law and expand access to health coverage for an additional four million children by increasing the current federal excise tax on cigarettes by 61 cents a pack. Raising the cost of cigarettes is an effective way to decrease youth smoking, which in turn will reduce cancer incidence and save health care dollars.
- Sign comprehensive cancer legislation being drafted by Senators Kennedy and Hutchison into law. This legislation would increase prevention efforts against cancer, promote early diagnosis and treatment of cancer, increase clinical trials research, reform the FDA, address the oncology workforce, provide patient and provider navigation programs, increase access to cancer care, provide cancer survivorship programs and enhance quality of life for survivors.



RESEARCH -- *The Obama-Biden Plan to Combat Cancer* recognizes that cancer funding has been flat in recent budgets and commits to doubling the national investment in cancer research over five years. The LAF supports this commitment but urges the administration to invest in “smarter science” that supports investigator-driven research but incorporates team science, and research infrastructure. We cannot effectively pursue 21st Century medicine with research and funding strategies that were established decades ago. We encourage the Obama Administration to:

- Support and increase investigator driven research, but also dramatically improve young investigator funding and mentorship as these are our next generation of researchers.
- Deploy a research infrastructure that provides for common resources and data standards to allow real time data deposition and transparent comparison and integration of science. Integral to this will be the integration of Electronic Health Records.
- Increase innovative research in new sciences such as stem cells and nanotechnology that could lead to breakthroughs in how we understand and treat cancer.
- Support team science programs that build the foundation of our biological understanding of cancer. Such strategies have already demonstrated success in projects like The Cancer Genome Atlas which profiled the “genomic landscape” of particular cancers.
- Include funding for other federal agencies including the FDA, CDC, and CMS to parallel research discovery with healthcare delivery and coordination through the HHS to ensure adequate and appropriate consolidation of objectives.

PUBLIC HEALTH – The LAF believes strongly that there is a clear discrepancy between what we know and what we do in cancer prevention and care. Hundreds of thousands Americans die each year because we do not effectively apply what we know. We believe that this is unacceptable. But we also believe that with the right leadership and objectives we can turn the tide by reducing cancer incidence and death, and greatly improving survivorship. The following recommendations address this need:

- HHS should coordinate health care practices and clinical care delivery, aligning NCI, NIH, FDA, CDC, and CMS policies to ensure that these agencies are not misaligned due to bureaucratic burdens.
- HHS should function as a central point for health information and dissemination, allowing science to guide our policy and giving Americans a credible resource for appropriate health information. The IOM has recently made a similar recommendation calling for an annual State of the Nation’s Health to be delivered by the U.S. Surgeon General and the HHS Secretary.
- Launch a comprehensive strategy against the two largest factors contributing to cancer incidence, tobacco and obesity/physical inactivity. Specific actions like ratifying the FCTC and allowing the FDA to regulate tobacco are immediate steps that can address the number one cause of cancer-related deaths. But we will also need a longer term comprehensive plan to cover nicotine cessation programs for tobacco and coordinate federal programs across departments to provide safe opportunities for physical activity and ensure access to healthy foods for all Americans.
- Adequately fund screening programs at the CDC for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers to ensure that all Americans have access to these proven early detection methods.
- Make it an immediate priority to improve the provisions of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). This is critical not only for the tens of thousands of pediatric and adolescent cancer patients to be diagnosed in 2009, but for all children, families, and Americans who want to ensure the best health for our youth.

The LAF welcomes the opportunity to work with the Obama Administration on these issues, and will provide additional information and resources at your request.