

**GASTRIC CANCER
FOUNDATION**



American Society for
Gastrointestinal Endoscopy



**GILDA'S CLUB
SOUTH FLORIDA**
An Affiliate of the
CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY



BRA COUTURE KC



October 1, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The stomach cancer cancer community is preparing for the month of November, Stomach Cancer Awareness Month, when we come together to raise awareness about this disease, including the signs and symptoms, so it can be detected earlier and at a more treatable stage.

Stomach cancer is, by definition, a recalcitrant cancer.¹ According to the American Cancer Society, the overall 5-year relative survival rate of people with stomach cancer in the United States is 36 percent.² At a late, or distant, stage, the 5-year survival rate is just seven percent.³ Even when stomach cancer is detected earlier, effective treatments are sparse and is why the stomach cancer community has made funding for research a top priority. We are grateful for your dedication to cancer research, treatment and prevention, and the great optimism you inspire in all of us through the Cancer Moonshot to end cancer as we know it.

November was first designated as Stomach Cancer Awareness Month in the 111th Congress, and over the years stomach cancer advocates have successfully secured stomach cancer proclamations in states across the country. In 2016, My Gut Feeling celebrated the first Stomach Cancer Awareness Day on November 30 with a social media campaign aimed at raising awareness about stomach cancer. That initiative has evolved into “The Power of Periwinkle” illumination campaign. In 2023, Debbie’s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer and My Gut Feeling, alongside international partners, lit up in periwinkle more than 170 landmarks globally, including the Delaware Memorial Bridge, Niagara Falls and One World Trade Center.

We ask for your support by recognizing with a proclamation November as National Stomach Cancer Awareness Month and by lighting the White House periwinkle, the official color of stomach cancer, to raise attention to this cancer and to honor those we have lost, survivors and the nearly 27,000 Americans who will be newly diagnosed this year.⁴

Incidence and prevalence of many cancers of the digestive system, including stomach cancer, are shifting to younger ages. In the United States, while the incidence of stomach cancer is decreasing, the incidence of early-onset stomach cancer is steadily increasing.^{5,6,7} Early-onset stomach cancer currently exceeds 30 percent of all stomach cancer cases in the United States.⁸ *Helicobacter pylori* infection is a primary identified cause of stomach cancer. Other risk factors include, but are not limited to, chronic gastritis, certain diets, smoking and a family history.

¹ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. Public Law No: 112-239; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-bill/4310?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22national+defense+authorization+act+2013%22%7D>

² American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2024. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2024. <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/all-cancer-facts-figures/2024-cancer-facts-figures.html>

³ Ibid.

⁴ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2024. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2024. <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/all-cancer-facts-figures/2024-cancer-facts-figures.html>

⁵ Triantafyllidis JK, Georgiou K, Konstadoulakis MM, Papalois AE. Early-onset gastrointestinal cancer: An epidemiological reality with great significance and implications. *World J Gastrointest Oncol.* 2024 Mar 15;16(3):583-597. doi: 10.4251/wjgo.v16.i3.583. PMID: 38577465; PMCID: PMC10989383.

⁶ National Cancer Institute, Clinical Trials and Translational Research Advisory Committee Gastric & Esophageal Cancers Working Group Report; Nov. 9, 2022. <https://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/ctac/1122/Goodman-Rustgi2.pdf>

⁷ William F Anderson, Charles S Rabkin, Natalie Turner, Joseph F Fraumeni, Jr, Philip S Rosenberg, M Constanza Camargo, The Changing Face of Noncardia Gastric Cancer Incidence Among US Non-Hispanic Whites, *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Volume 110, Issue 6, June 2018, Pages 608–615, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djx262>

⁸ Ibid

These risk factors, however, do not explain the recent rise in certain types of stomach cancer. Approximately 10 percent of stomach cancers are associated with one of several hereditary genetic syndromes.⁹

Stomach cancer also disproportionately impacts people of color, with rates among Black, Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaskan Native populations roughly double those in White individuals.¹⁰

Poor stomach cancer survival rates and alarming early-onset trends coincide with an unmet need for more research, education and awareness. On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing stomach cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, health care providers, and researchers, we ask you to join us in our endeavors to reduce death and suffering caused by stomach cancer by recognizing November as National Stomach Awareness Month in 2024 and to light the White House periwinkle to improve awareness and understanding of this cancer.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please contact Camille Bonta at (202) 320-3658 or cbonta@summithealthconsulting.com with Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer with any questions.

Sincerely,

4th Angel Mentoring Program
American College of Gastroenterology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
Bag It
Bra Couture KC
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Gastric Cancer Foundation
GI Cancers Alliance
Gilda's Club South Florida
My Gut Feeling
No Stomach for Cancer
Project Periwinkle
Raymond Foundation
Stomach Cancer Task Force
Stupid Strong
Triage Cancer
We Finish Together

⁹ National Cancer Institute, Clinical Trials and Translational Research Advisory Committee Gastric & Esophageal Cancers Working Group Report; Nov. 9, 2022. <https://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/ctac/1122/Goodman-Rustgi2.pdf>

¹⁰ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2024. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2024. <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/all-cancer-facts-figures/2024-cancer-facts-figures.html>