



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Debbie's Dream Foundation Honors Congressman Chris Smith as 2025 Congressional Steward of the Dream to Cure Stomach Cancer

Historic number of advocates unite on Capitol Hill to push for increased stomach cancer research funding amid growing concerns over federal science budget cuts.

Fort Lauderdale, FL – March 5, 2025 – Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) successfully wrapped up its 13th Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day, where nearly 200 patients, caregivers, and supporters met with members of Congress to advocate for increased federal funding for stomach cancer research. As part of this year's efforts, DDF honored Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) with the 2025 Congressional Steward of the Dream to Cure Stomach Cancer Award for his unwavering support of stomach cancer research funding.

Since 2017, Congressman Smith has been a steadfast advocate for maintaining stomach cancer as a disease eligible for research funding through the Department of Defense's Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). His commitment to signing the bipartisan letter led by Rep. Joe Wilson and Rep. Lois Frankel each year has resulted in \$42.5 million dedicated to stomach cancer research through this program since FY15. This funding has paved the way for critical advancements in understanding and combating this devastating disease, providing hope to countless patients and families.

"Despite an uncertain climate for medical research funding, we remain steadfast in our mission to ensure stomach cancer research remains a priority," said Andrea Eidelman, CEO of Debbie's Dream Foundation. "Congressman Smith has played a pivotal role in securing crucial research funding, and we are honored to recognize his leadership in advancing policies that bring us closer to earlier detection, better treatments, and ultimately, a cure."

DDF's Capitol Hill Reception brought together lawmakers, scientific experts, and patient advocates for an evening of recognition and renewed commitment to the fight against stomach cancer. Congressman Smith was acknowledged for his dedication to ensuring that stomach cancer research remains a federally funded priority.

Throughout Advocacy Day, advocates engaged in 248 meetings with congressional offices, sharing personal stories and urging legislators to support funding for gastric cancer research through the PRCRP and National Cancer Institute initiatives. The foundation remains hopeful that bipartisan support will continue to drive critical research efforts forward.

(More)

For more information on DDF's advocacy efforts or how to get involved, visit www.DebbiesDream.org/Advocacy.

About Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer

DDF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about gastric cancer, advancing research funding, and providing international education and support to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF's ultimate goal is to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality.

DDF was founded in 2009 by Debbie Zelman after she was diagnosed with stage IV incurable gastric cancer in 2008 and given only weeks to live. Debbie is considered a pioneer by many for bringing awareness to the plight of stomach cancer patients worldwide, as well as to the lack of federal funding for stomach cancer research. She did all of this while receiving hundreds of rounds of chemo and daily oral treatments. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, at 50, almost a decade later. As a result of her leadership, DDF now has a Scientific and Medical Advisory Board of world-renowned doctors and chapters throughout the United States, and in Canada, Germany, and Japan. DDF strives to continue Debbie's mission to make her dream a reality. To learn more, visit www.DebbiesDream.org.



Photo One (l to r): Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) receiving the 2025 Congressional Steward of the Dream to Cure Stomach Cancer Award from Debbie's Dream Foundation's Board President, Michael Ehren, and CEO, Andrea Eidelman, during the foundation's 13th Annual Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day.

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