Number of Cancer Survivors in the U.S. Reaches 18.6 Million — Projected to Exceed 22 Million by 2035

American Cancer Society report is released ahead of National Cancer Survivors Day, Sunday, June 1st.

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The number of people living with a history of cancer in the United States is estimated at 18.6 million as of January 1, 2025 and projected to exceed 22 million by 2035, according to a new report, Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Statistics, 2025, led by the American Cancer Society (ACS).

The study also found notable disparities in treatment for many common cancers, including lung and colorectal. The findings are published today in CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians, alongside its consumer-friendly companion, Fast Facts: Cancer Treatment and Survivorship, available on cancer.org.

“Behind every survivor of cancer, there is a story of resilience, but also of unmet needs,” said Dr. Nikita Sandeep Wagle, principal scientist, cancer surveillance research at the American Cancer Society and lead author of the report. “Many survivors cope with critical issues, such as long-term effects of treatment, financial hardship, and fear of recurrence. It’s vital we recognize and respond to these needs in an equitable manner.”

For the study, ACS and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) collaborated to estimate cancer prevalence in the U.S. using data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) cancer registries, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Program of Cancer Registries and National Center for Health Statistics, the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries, and the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, cancer treatment patterns were presented from the National Cancer Database along with a brief overview of treatment-related side effects.

Highlights of the study include:

- The three most prevalent cancers are prostate (3,552,460), melanoma of the skin (816,580), and colorectal (729,550) among males and breast (4,305,570), uterine corpus (945,540), and

thyroid (859,890) among females.

- About one half (51%) of survivors were diagnosed within the past 10 years, and nearly four out of five (79%) survivors were aged 60 years and older.
- The number of survivors varies by state, from almost two million in California to about 32,000 in Wyoming and 29,000 in the District of Columbia, largely reflecting population size.
- The number of female breast cancer survivors is projected to reach 5.3 million by January 1, 2035 – an increase of one million women from 2025, marking the largest projected growth among the top 10 most prevalent cancers.
- Uninsured people diagnosed with stage I colorectal cancer have lower five-year survival rates than privately insured people with stage II disease.
- Racial differences in treatment in 2021 were common across disease stage. Black people with stage I-II lung cancer were less likely to undergo surgery than their White counterparts (47% vs. 52%).
- Larger disparities exist for rectal cancer, with 39% of Black people with stage I disease undergoing surgery compared to 64% of their White counterparts.

“Efforts to expand access to high-quality care regardless of your skin color or bank balance are vital to reducing disparities and advancing equity for everyone affected by cancer, which is ultimately all of us,” said Rebecca Siegel, senior scientific director, cancer risk factors & screening surveillance research at the American Cancer Society and senior author of the study. “We need to do more to level the playing field and end barriers to quality care both during and after treatment.”

"These findings demonstrate that early detection and improved treatment are making a real difference in the fight against cancer,” said Lisa A. Lacasse, president of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. “There continues to be an urgent need to protect and expand access to care, especially at a time when proposed cuts to Medicaid and prevention and screening programs threaten to reverse our progress and undo the gains we have achieved. We cannot afford to turn back the clock now. ACS CAN will continue to work with lawmakers to stress that cuts have consequences and will only slow our work to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.”

Other ACS researchers contributing to the study include Dr. Leticia Nogueira, Dr. Robin Yabroff, Dr. Farhad Islami, Dr. Rick Alteri, and Dr. Ahmedin Jemal.

Additional ACS Resources:

- Survivorship during and after treatment

- Cancer Statistics 2025
- VOICES of Black Women Study
- Cancer Statistics Center

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