

# NCI Acting Director's Report

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Douglas R. Lowy, M.D.

*NCI Council of Research Advocates  
June 29, 2022*

# Thank You!



## **Anjee Q. Davis**

President  
Fight Colorectal Cancer  
Springfield, Missouri



## **Jennifer W. Pegher**

Executive Director  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

# Incoming Chair

## **Annie Ellis**

Research Advocate, Gynecologic Cancer  
Steering Committee  
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance  
New York, New York



# Today's talk

- Continuity of NCI Leadership
- How NCI is Engaging with the Cancer Community
- FY23 NCI Budget
- Some Research Updates
- Cancer Moonshot: Success of Initial Investments and New, “Supercharged” Activity

# NCI Directors: 2010 – Present



**Harold E.  
Varmus, M.D.**  
2010 – 2015



**Norman E. "Ned"  
Sharpless, M.D.**  
2017 – 2022



**Douglas R. Lowy,  
M.D. (Acting)**  
2015 – 2017, 2019,  
2022

# NCI Leadership Team

<b>James H. Doroshow, MD</b>	Deputy Director	Since 2011
<b>Dinah S. Singer, PhD</b>	Deputy Director	Since 2016
<b>Douglas R. Lowy, MD</b>	Deputy Director	Since 2010
<b>Donna Siegle</b>	Executive Officer/Deputy Director for Management	Since 2016
<b>Amy Williams</b>	Director, Office of Advocacy Relations	Since 2011
<b>Patrick McGarey, JD</b>	Associate Director for Finance and Legislation	Since 2015
<b>Anne Lubenow</b>	Chief of Staff, previously Deputy Executive Officer	Since 2019/2011
<b>Maureen Johnson, PhD</b>	Special Assistant to the Director	Since 2006

# Some Key NCI Initiatives and Decisions 2015 - 2019



**2015**    **Precision Medicine Initiative-Oncology**



**2015**    **National Cryo-EM user facility** at Frederick National Laboratory



**2016**    **Cancer Moonshot** (21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act)



**2016-2022**    **>\$40M increase to P30 support grants for NCI-designated cancer centers**



**2019**    Enabled Congress to recognize low NCI funding rates for **investigator-initiated research**

# Some Current and Near-Future NCI Activities

CANCER MOONSHOT	CANCER CENTERS	FREDERICK NATIONAL LAB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to fund the most promising initiatives of the initial Cancer Moonshot: a “soft landing”</li><li>• Year of planning for next phase</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop Phase 3 for the P30 Cancer Center Support Grants</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select at least one new signature project at Frederick National Lab</li></ul>



# Some Major Meetings and Events (Recent & Upcoming)

- American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Remarks and Fireside Chat with Dr. David Tuveson, informal press “gaggle” – *April 2022*
- National Association of Cancer Center Development Officers (NACCDO)-Public Affairs and Marketing Network (PAMN) – *April 2022*
- ASCO Plenary Speech and Meeting with Board of Directors – *June 3-4, 2022*
- Meeting with AACI – *October 2022*





# Childhood Cancer Data Initiative



**Dr. Gregory Reaman**

**Scientific Director  
Childhood Cancer Data Initiative**  
*Starting September 2022*



**Dr. Brigitte Widemann**

**Special Advisor to the Director  
for Childhood Cancer**

# Recent online conversation about health equity

**NIH NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE**

Live across NCI's Facebook and YouTube Accounts

**Equity in the Healthcare Workforce: Why it Matters for Patients**

Wednesday, June 8, 2022  
3:15 p.m. ET

**PARTICIPANTS**

**Dr. Doug Lowy**  
National Cancer Institute Acting Director

**Dr. Paulette Gray**  
National Cancer Institute

**Dr. Jeffrey Hall**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Dr. Randy Jones**  
Oncology Nursing Society



[youtube.com/NCIgov](https://www.youtube.com/NCIgov)  
[facebook.com/cancer.gov](https://www.facebook.com/cancer.gov)



“What [achieving workforce diversity and equity] potentially means is that the way we provide care, the way that we deliver services, is really going to more effectively account for things such as the economic, environmental, social, as well as political conditions that shape health.”

- Dr. Jeffrey Hall

# FY 2023 Budget Request for the National Institutes of Health

## House Committee on Appropriations Hearing, May 11, 2022



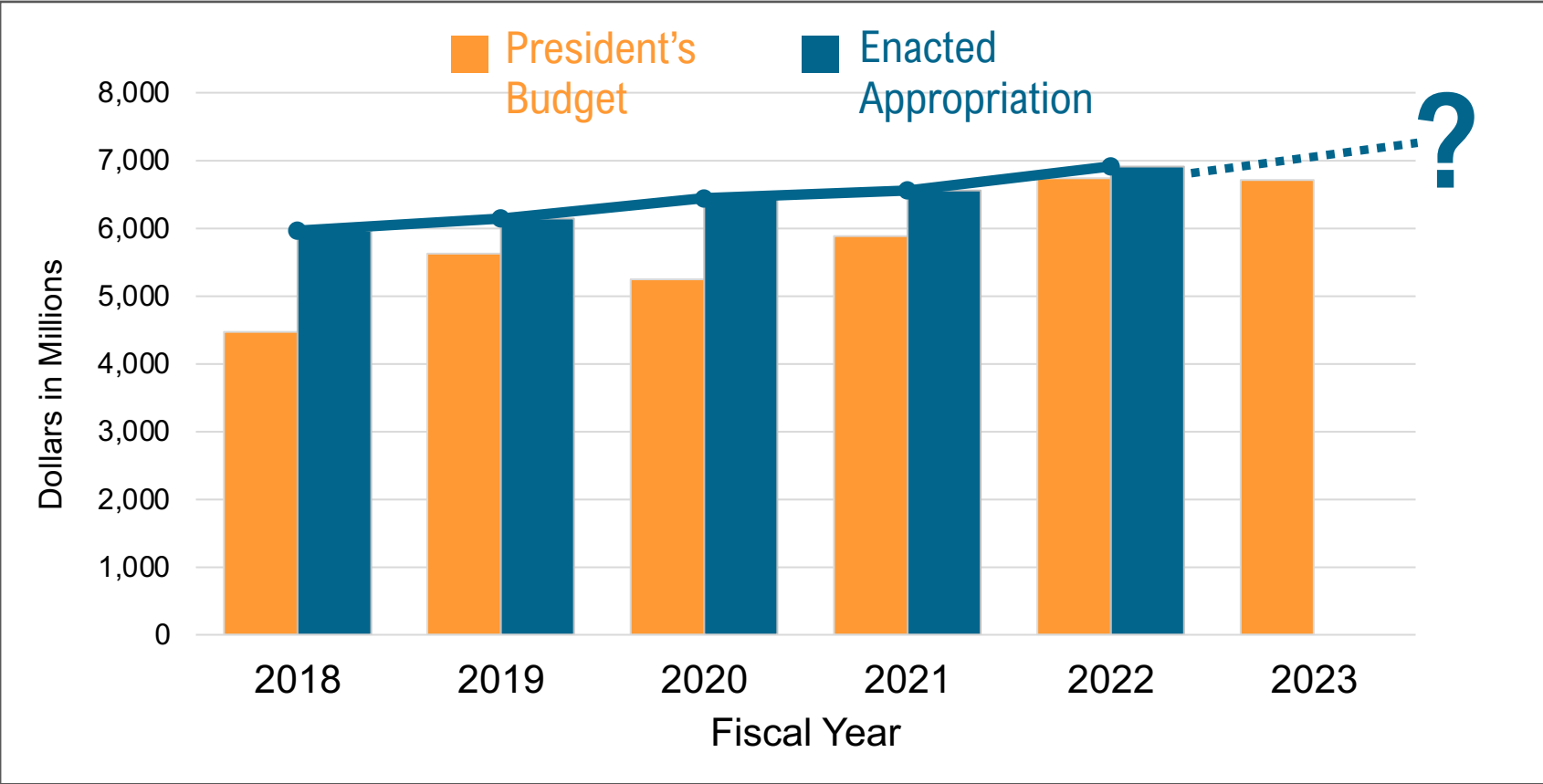
“This [2022 omnibus] includes an increase of \$353 million to fund a greater number of research proposals at the NCI and support for the Cancer Moonshot initiative **that will save lives by speeding cancer research progress and improving prevention detection and treatment efforts.**”

*–Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)*

“Cancer research... is something I think our investments with you all [NCI] are proving to be great... **the research is just truly incredible, as are the results.** So, keep up the good fight.”

*–Representative Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)*

# President's NCI Budget and Enacted Appropriations



Source: NCI Budget Fact Book

- Strong bipartisan support for cancer research across Congress
- Congress has declined to cut funding to cancer research – even in challenging budget cycles

House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee FY23 Bill **proposes \$7.4 B for NCI** (includes \$216 M for Cancer Moonshot) and would represent an overall **\$466 M increase for NCI** over FY22



# Cancer Grand Challenges 2022

**\$100 million** to four interdisciplinary teams from around the world to solve some of the **toughest challenges in cancer research:**

Explore **cancer cachexia** as a tumor-driven syndrome

Understand **extrachromosomal DNA**, which helps tumors evolve and evade treatment

Develop **engineered T-cell therapies** for childhood cancer

Discover what triggers normal cells to become cancerous to **inform prevention**

World's largest funders of cancer research form transatlantic partnership to establish  
Cancer Grand Challenges

CANCER GRAND  
CHALLENGES



CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK



NATIONAL  
CANCER  
INSTITUTE



# Uterine Cancer Death Rates Rising, Highest Among Black Women in the United States

- **Black women are 2x as likely to die of uterine cancer** compared to other racial and ethnic groups.
- Most of the mortality increase is attributable to non-endometrioid uterine cancer, **which disproportionately affects Black and Hispanic women.**
- Non-endometrioid cancer mortality **increased 3.5% per year for Black women and 6.7% for Hispanic women** between 2010 and 2017.

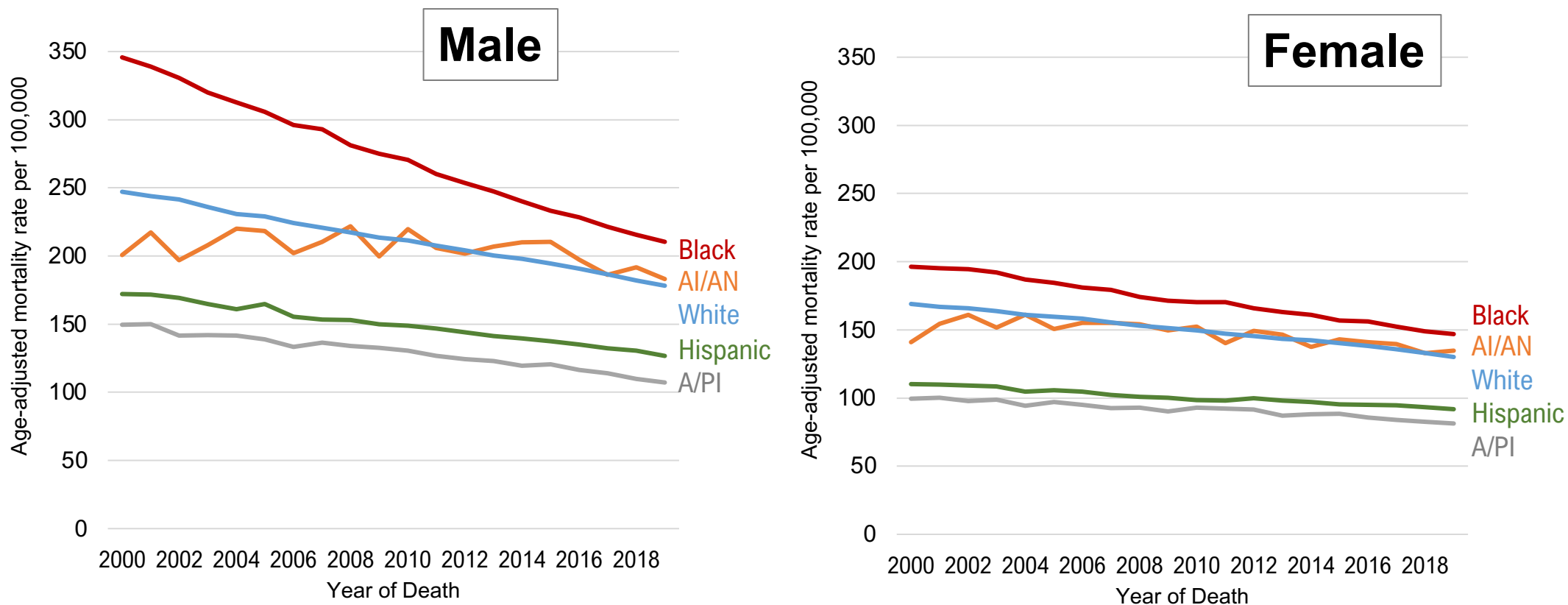


- **There is an urgent need for new research in the affected populations.**



Clarke, et al. **Racial and Ethnic Differences in Hysterectomy-Corrected Uterine Corpus Cancer Mortality by Stage and Histologic Subtype.** *JAMA Oncology.* May 5, 2022

# Age-adjusted cancer mortality trends by race and ethnicity (2000-19)



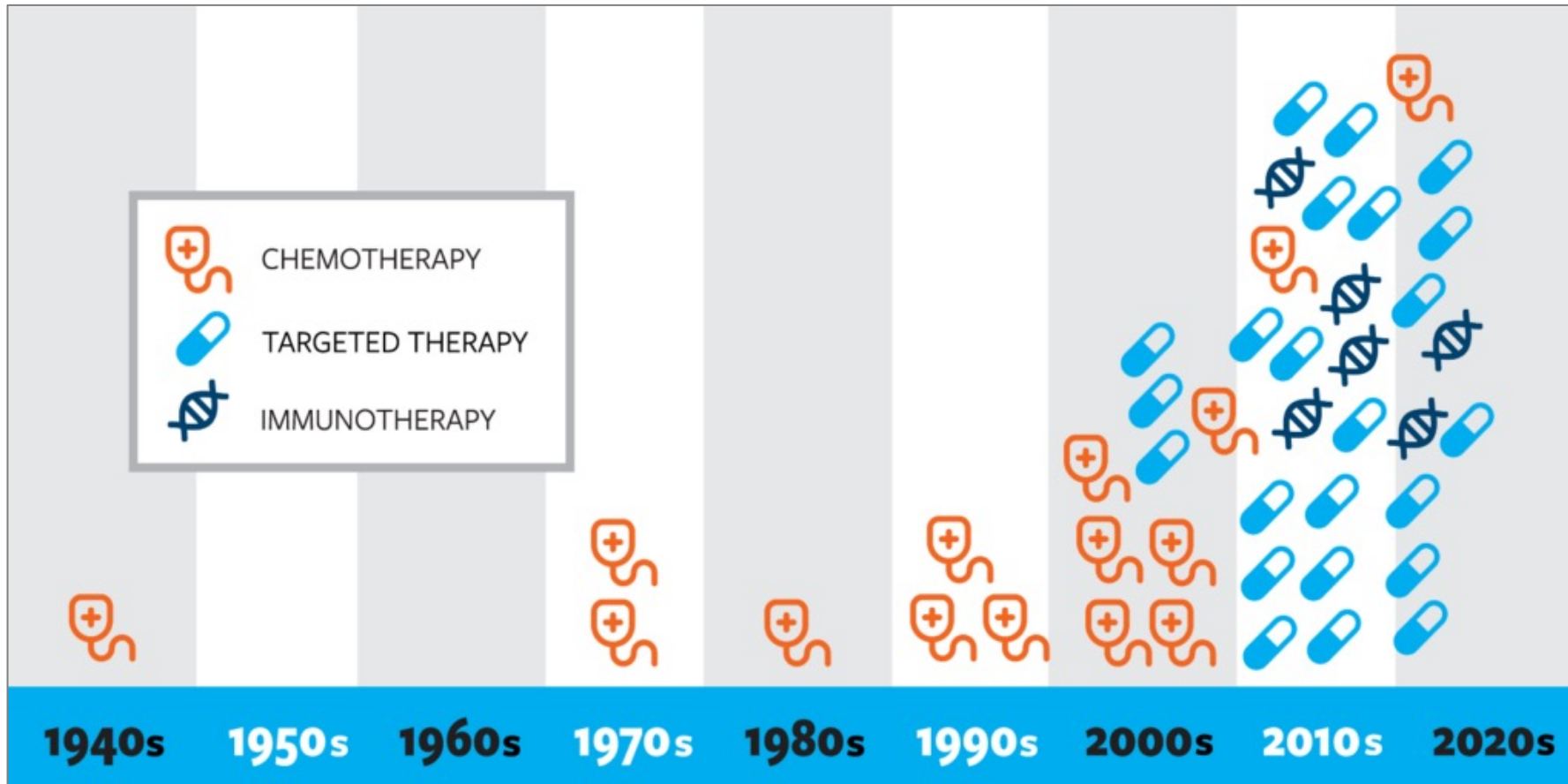
Source: NCI Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program (SEER), [seer.cancer.gov](http://seer.cancer.gov)



For more, see Lawrence, et al: **Trends in Cancer Mortality Among Black Individuals in the U.S. From 1999 to 2019** – *JAMA Oncology*, May 19, 2022



# Increasing rate of FDA approvals: lung cancer treatment



Source: Lung Cancer Research Foundation



See also Howlader, et al: **The Effect of Advances in Lung-Cancer Treatment on Population Mortality** - *New England Journal of Medicine*, Aug 13, 2020

# Examples of Opportunities in Pancreatic Cancer Research



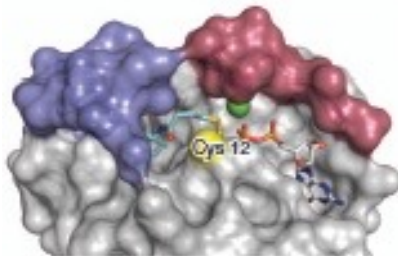
## Prevention

*Pancreatic Cancer Prevention Vaccine*



## Early Detection

*Multi-Cancer Detection Screening*



Ostram, et al, Nature 2013

## Treatment

*Targeting KRAS G12C and G12D*

# Cancer Moonshot<sup>SM</sup>: Accelerate discovery, increase collaboration, and expand data sharing

In the Cancer Moonshot's first 4 years (2017-2021)



>2,000  
Publications

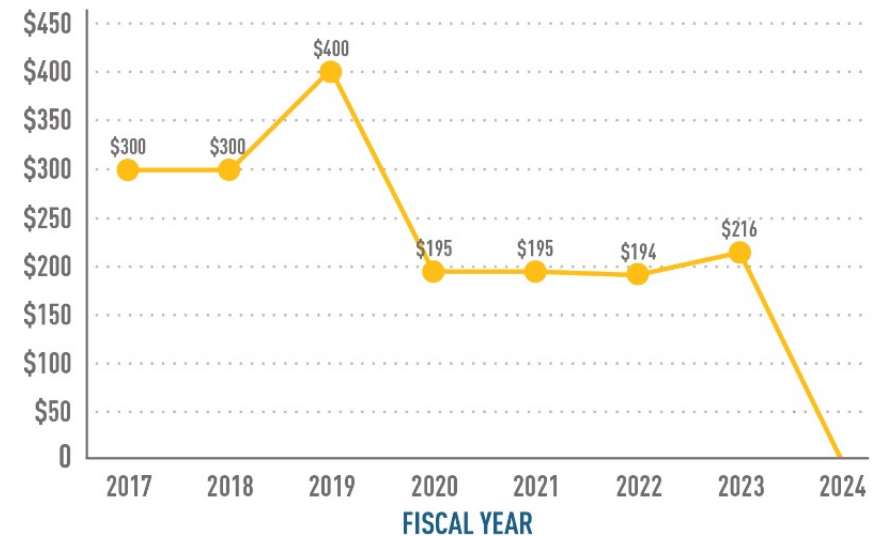


49  
Clinical  
Trials



>30  
Patent  
Filings

Cancer Moonshot Funding Authorized Under the 21st Century Cures Act  
(dollars in millions)



*We should continue to support the most promising initiatives from the initial Cancer Moonshot while developing additional activities to meet challenging new goals.*

# Goals of Cancer Moonshot Next Phase

- 1** Cut the cancer death rate in half within 25 years.
- 2** Transform the meaning of cancer.
- 3** Address cancer-associated inequities.

# Accomplishing the New Goals



**Invest in the pipeline of new drugs for cancer prevention, interception, and treatment**



**Ensure equitable health care delivery of current and new standards of care**



**Expand clinical trials to speed evaluation of candidate interventions in diverse populations (racial, ethnic, geographic)**



**Increase diversity of cancer research and care workforce to resemble the communities we serve**

# Some FY 23 Activities to Support Ongoing Moonshot and Jumpstart Next Phase

## Upcoming Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)

- Cancer Moonshot Scholars Diversity Program
- Feasibility Trial for Asymptomatic Multi-Cancer Detection Screening



## Notices of Special Interest, Request for Information

- Adapt Visualization Methods to Enhance Cancer Moonshot Data
- Harmonize Existing Data to Human Tumor Atlas Network (HTAN) Standards
- Fusion Oncoproteins in Childhood Cancers

*View details at [cancer.gov/moonshot](https://cancer.gov/moonshot).*

# Accomplishing the New Goals



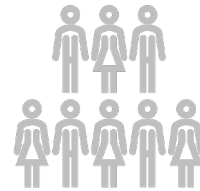
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# NCI's Strategic Plan for Clinical Trials: Focus of Initial Implementation Activities

## Streamlining Clinical Trials

- Limiting data elements collected
- Using EHRs to support clinical trials

## Decentralized Trial Activities

- Local/remote conduct of study procedures
- Telehealth use in clinical trials

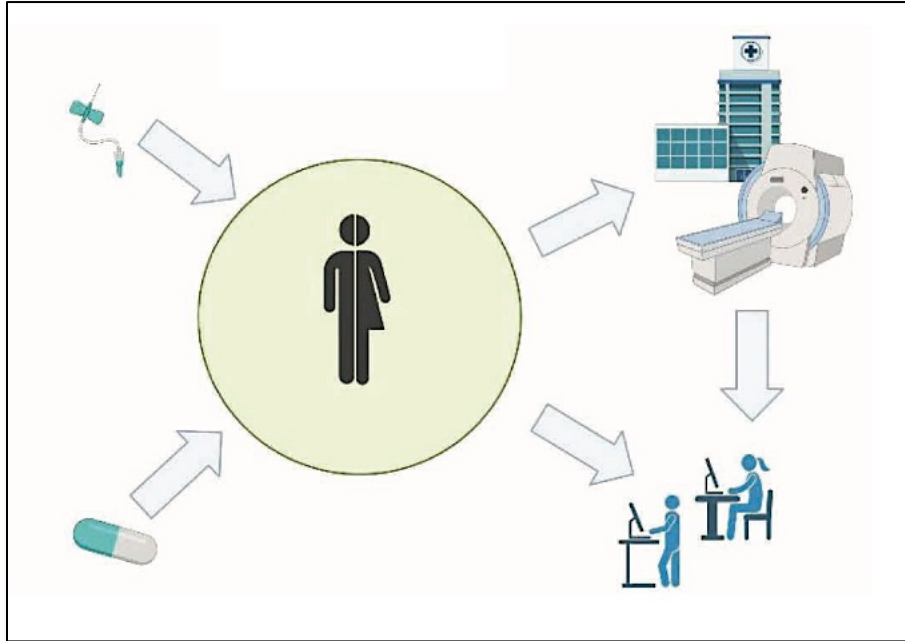
## Patient Access to Trials

- Broaden eligibility criteria
- Conduct trials that support minority and underserved patient needs

## Workforce: Emerging Issues

- Staff attrition during COVID-19 pandemic
- Demographic characterization of clinical trials leadership for NCI-sponsored trials

# Adapting Cancer Clinical Trials During COVID



*A patient-centered clinical trials enterprise*

Accelerated by the need to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, **the patient was put at the center of clinical trials activity**, allowing:

- **Remote consenting**
- Being able to do **laboratory tests at home** or at a local facility
- Having **drugs delivered** at home
- **Remote monitoring and auditing**



Flaherty, et al. **Rethinking Cancer Clinical Trial Conduct Induced by COVID-19: An Academic Center, Industry, Government, and Regulatory Agency Perspective.** *Cancer Discovery*. July 21, 2021

# NCI's Clinical Trials Programs:

## Permanent New Operational Processes

**Shipping  
CTEP IND  
Oral Agents**  
(PMB to local site  
→ patients)

**Remote  
Consent**

**Remote  
Auditing**

**Advanced  
Practice  
Providers and  
Study Agent  
Orders**

# Thank you!

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

[www.cancer.gov/espanol](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol)

1-800-4-CANCER

[NCInfo@nih.gov](mailto:NCInfo@nih.gov)

[@NCIDirector](#)

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