

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Hawaii Newsletter - May 2024



2024 Cancer Action Day

On March 21st, ACS CAN volunteer advocates met with over 50 lawmakers and their staff at this year's Cancer Action Day. We were excited to have over 30 volunteers including ACS Hawaii Guam Board Chair Tricia Buskirk and Board Member Dr. William Loui join us. Chair Buskirk shared, "I can't wait to tell the Board how amazing it was and how it felt to do so much good for our cause, our mission and our vision!" This year advocates talked to lawmakers on the following legislative priorities: funding for a multi-ethnic cohort study of AANHPI; support for Fertility Preservation; Biomarker Testing Resolution; keep existing smoke-free air laws. Check out all our [2024 Cancer Action Day](#) photos.

Mahalo to ACS CAN volunteers who joined us!



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2024 Legislative Session

About 2,700 bills were introduced this session and nearly 190 will be considered by Governor Josh Green to become law. These are a few of the bill's ACS CAN followed this session. **Key: Green = Win Red = Loss**

Access:

- Biomarker Testing Resolution - Auditor Study (HCR 53) – Supported, **Adopted**
- Emergency Prescriptions (HB1836) – Supported, **Passed**
- Fertility Preservation (HB1624) – Supported, **Died**

Cancer Research and University of Hawaii Cancer Center

- Lahaina Fire Registry and cohort study (part of Maui Wildfire expense bills (SB3068) – Supported, **Passed**
 - \$1.5 million to conduct a multiethnic cohort study on the health effects
 - \$834,681 to develop and maintain a registry of those affected by the wildfires
- Multi-ethnic cohort study on AANHPI (SB2722) – Supported, **Died**
- Cigarette tax increase to fund Hawaii cancer research special fund (HB2504) – Supported, **Died**

Tobacco Prevention & Control:

- Attorney General's Tobacco Enforcement Unit Funding Increase (HB982) – Supported, **Passed**
- Exempt Cigar shipments by mail (SB2109) – Opposed, **Died**
- Legalization of Cannabis (SB3335) – Opposed, **Died**

MAHALO Volunteers!

You've contacted representatives, attended events, joined in-person Lobby Days, and so much more. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your passion and commitment to creating lifesaving policy change for people with cancer and their loved ones. Together, our work helps save lives. Mahalo for sharing your stories and your voice! We couldn't do this without you!

- Your Hawaii ACS CAN Volunteer Ambassador Team



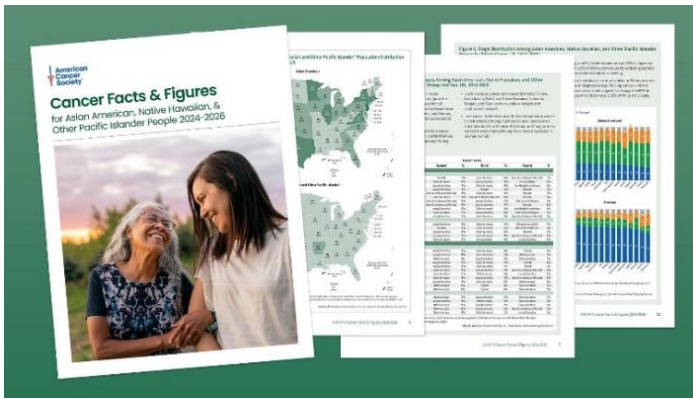
Left Photo (from left to right): Ambassador Congressional Team Lead Kellen King, State Lead Ambassador Chelsea Gonzales, Vice-State Lead Ambassador McKayla McCullah, Guam Ambassador Congressional Team Lead Dr. Annette David, ACS CAN Staff Partner Cynthia Au, Ambassador Congressional Team Lead Uri Martos



Photo Left: Senior Advisor Jenny Hausler

AANHPI Cancer Report!

A first-of-its-kind [Cancer Facts & Figures for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander People, 2024-2026](#) report shows cancer is the second-leading cause of death in the United States nationally but **ranks first** in Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese individuals, with **lung cancer** the leading cause of death in men of every Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) ethnic group.



Addressing Cancer Care Barriers for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders Virtual Event

In honor of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) and ACS CAN's AAPI Volunteer Caucus are hosting a virtual event to discuss cancer inequities among AANHPI people that face stereotypes, stigma, aggregated data that mask disparities, and cultural and language barriers. The presenters will discuss how disaggregated data, representative and culturally component oncology care, and equitable and accessible patient navigation services can improve access to cancer care and cancer outcomes for AANHPI people.

Watch it here: [Addressing Cancer Care Barriers for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. \(youtube.com\)](#)



Volunteer Leadership Affinity Groups

The Volunteer Leadership Affinity Groups are giving voice to the unequal burden of cancer in their communities. The Groups are working on building partnerships, increasing awareness, and engaging new volunteers in their important work. Visit the Affinity Group's webpage to learn more on how to join: www.fightcancer.org/AffinityGroups

Affinity groups: AAPI Volunteer Caucus, ACSi Se Puede, Black Volunteer Caucus, LGBTQIA+ & Allies Engagement Group, Young Leaders Caucus, Indigenous Voices



If you are interested in joining, contact Leslie Ferreira at Leslie.Ferreira@cancer.org.

Vice State Lead Ambassador McKayla on Indigenous Voices

The Indigenous Volunteer Voices Group works to reduce the cancer burden among Native peoples by advocating for policies that honor our unique history, wisdom, culture, and traditions. Currently the group is made up of co-founders McKayla McCullah, Karen Malcolm, Kitti Walkup-Birkhead, Jessica Ivanoff, and Nancy Wahtomy. As a co-founder, this



group is held dearly to my heart. Many times, when I talk about this special group, I get choked up because it will always and forever be my lifelong goal to help uplift any burden on indigenous people. The majority of my great-grandparents were diagnosed with cancer and passed from the disease. Both of my Native Hawaiian great-grandparents were diagnosed with cancer. My great-grandmother Wakinikona was diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer in her early 30's and passed away shortly after; leaving my Papa Sid motherless when he was only in 8th grade. Hearing this story each time from my papa makes me choke up because I lost my father when I was a senior in high school. Though it was not to cancer, I know what it feels like to lose a parent, a best friend, or a loved one suddenly. Though my father is not Hawaiian, he always made sure that I was thoroughly educated in my culture and deeply rooted to where I come from. He taught me to always stand up and stay strong for the communities and people that helped raise me.

After attending ACS CAN's Young Leader Summit in 2023 in Chicago, and although there was diverse participation, I realized I was the only indigenous person out over 70 people present. After introductions, I went up to my room to reflect on how I felt. Feelings of being upset, fear of not being seen or heard, intimidation, and loneliness came up. I talked to a few people who I felt comfortable with, and they encouraged me to speak up and bring about the issue. It was quite shocking to know that indigenous peoples have some of the highest death rates due to cancer, yet there was no solid representation of voices or a comfortable and collective space for us to communicate with one another within the organization.

A conversation was all it took for change to take place...A few months later, Leslie Ferriera, Director of Grassroots Alliances, as well as other supporting staff members, helped to piece together the Indigenous Volunteer Voices Group (IVVG). In February 2024, the Affinity Group Roundtable Summit occurred. Here, the foundational members of the IVVG met and created relationships.

As a Native Hawaiian woman, I finally felt at home with this group of indigenous people. We all shared a cultural bond that somehow makes me tear up with happiness each time I see them. I'll never forget the moment when I had asked them their names and introductions were in their traditional tongue. I cried because a part of me knew that this is how they should have been introduced to everyone at the summit; yet no one else had even considered asking us this.

Later that evening, I proposed that we had to go on stage, do a land acknowledgement to whose land we were on, and introduce ourselves in our Native tongue. After doing so, the bond with this indigenous family of mine, felt even closer. Many tears were shed when we had breakout groups, realizing that although we may come from lands far apart from each other, the amount of cultural, individual, and generational pain that we carry was similar. Hence, the importance of the creation of this group and why it is held so dearly to my heart. Though we are still in the early building stages of this affinity group, this is a strong team of indigenous voices that will trailblaze for more generations of indigenous volunteers of ACS CAN to follow.

Mahalo,
McKayla McCullah, Vice State Lead



Dedicate a Lights of Hope

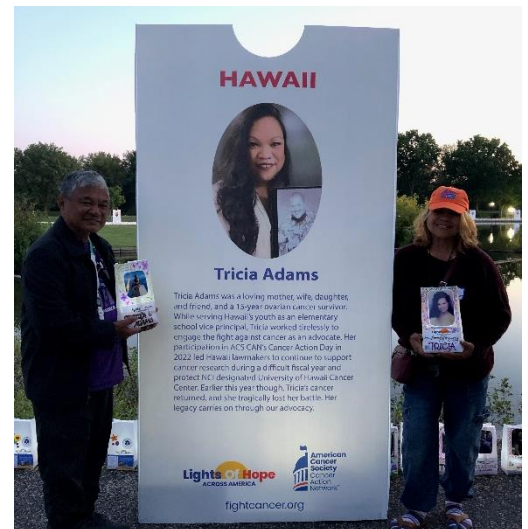
Lights of Hope is the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's signature fundraising event dedicated to honoring those who have been touched by cancer and remembering those we've lost. This year, 2024 is the 14th anniversary of this event.

Funds raised through Lights of Hope enable ACS CAN to continue its mission to make fighting cancer a national priority. [Dedicate a Lights of Hope](#) today and help us send a visible reminder to Congress that they need to do more to help fight this disease. Dedicate a **Lights of Hope bag** to someone [special](#).

We are also accepting sponsorships! Let us know if you would like to sponsor us at this very special [event](#).

All Lights of Hope donations automatically comes with a year of ACS CAN membership to support our work. Contact your staff partner Cynthia at Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org or 808-460-6109 with any questions.

Contributions or membership payments to the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc. are not tax deductible.



Cancer Votes

Through [#CancerVotes](#), we're raising the voices of cancer patients, survivors, and their families to ensure the fight against cancer is a priority issue in this year's elections. Every election presents us with a new opportunity to educate candidates and the public about the important role our government and its elected officials play in the fight against cancer. Cancer Votes is how you, as a volunteer can make sure that candidates are addressing issues that matter to cancer patients, survivors, and their families and friends. You will receive a kit after training completion. If you are interested in participating, you can complete a 10-minute training here: www.cancervotes.org/training

Announcements:

Late Summer Volunteer In-person Training (TBD): Interested in attending? [Fill out an interest form.](#)

Questions or want to know more? Contact your staff partner, Cynthia, at Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org or 808-460-6109.