

# ACTIONS

SPRING 2015 | ISSUE 28 CONGRESSIONAL FAMILIES CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAM | OF THE PREVENT CANCER FOUNDATION



CONGRESSIONAL FAMILIES  
CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAM  
OF THE PREVENT CANCER FOUNDATION

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## Lifestyle Matters:

### The Significant Impact Nutrition And Lifestyle Have on Preventing Cancer

*Thomas Edison is best known as an inventor and businessman, but he also was a source of great wisdom. More than 80 years ago he predicted that, "The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in a proper diet and in the cause and prevention of disease."*



Lisa McGovern, Dr. Lisa Nelson, Rep. Richard Neal, Bo Aldigé

While there is certainly still a need for lifesaving medications, Edison was well ahead of his time in recognizing the significant role nutrition and lifestyle play in preventing disease and optimizing overall health.

In celebration of National Nutrition Month, the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program hosted a discussion featuring **Dr. Lisa Nelson** at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, March 25th. Dr. Nelson is a primary care physician in Pittsfield,

Massachusetts and Director of Medical Education for the internationally renowned Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, located in the Berkshires in Massachusetts.

**Representative Richard Neal** (MA) introduced his constituent, Dr. Nelson, and spoke about the importance of teaching hospitals like the University of Massachusetts Medical School from which Dr. Nelson graduated.

"How we live, how we move, what we are exposed to, what we eat, and how we feel, all have an impact on our cancer risk," Dr. Nelson said as she began her remarks. She challenged the traditional model that our health is normal until we are sick, offering instead a spectrum model for disease development and progression. When we make lifestyle decisions that support the prevention of chronic illnesses, including cancer, we move along that health spectrum toward holistic wellness and away from disease. Our choices have an impact at every point along the spectrum.

Dr. Nelson also emphasized the importance of healthy food. "Food has bioactive components that can act like medicine to our bodies," she said. We can incorporate healthy eating habits into our diet gradually by choosing one small improvement each day. Some of these changes might include removing excess sugar, selecting whole grains, avoiding processed meals and embracing whole foods that look the same on the plate as they do in nature. Dr. Nelson reinforced the positive message that it is *never too late to make lifestyle changes that can have a huge impact on your health*. She referenced a study released in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### THE DANGERS OF INDOOR TANNING

Wednesday, May 20, 2015  
B-338 Rayburn, 4:30–6:00pm

### BREAST IMAGING SEMINAR

June 17, 2015  
9:30–11:00am (Location to follow)

### 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

Thursday, September 17, 2015  
Cannon Caucus, 12:00–1:30pm

### WALK/RUN 5K AND HEALTH FAIR

Sunday, October 4, 2015  
Nationals Park, 8:00am–12:00pm

### ANNUAL SPRING GALA

Friday, March 11, 2016  
National Building Museum

## CONGRESSIONAL SPOUSE CALENDAR

For more information on events,  
visit [congressionalfamilies.org/events](http://congressionalfamilies.org/events)  
password: families

Contact [lisa.mcGovern@preventcancer.org](mailto:lisa.mcGovern@preventcancer.org)  
if you have a bipartisan event to share.



## THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN...

Dear Congressional Families Program Members and Friends:

It is difficult to think about cancer. It can be frightening, overwhelming, and intimidating. Unless you are a health professional, a cancer survivor or have supported someone as they navigated the disease, you probably avoid the topic at all costs. And I don't blame you!

So instead of focusing on cancer, let's focus on health. Let's focus on prevention.

When I consider cancer prevention, I am reminded of this sentiment—**grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.** This thought offers great perspective and comfort and has special meaning with respect to cancer and cancer prevention.

There are things that we must accept that we cannot change, such as a genetic predisposition, exposure to environmental factors and other factors beyond our control that may increase our risk for cancer. Yet there are also many things we can change, including what we eat, how much we move, whether we use tobacco and if we know our family history. We can also take charge of educating ourselves about medical screening guidelines and proactively following them (though access to affordable health care may limit that ability for some). The challenge is whether we can summon the courage to take control of our health and make choices that contribute to our overall well-being.

Part of the mission of the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program is to provide you with information and tools that can help you develop the "wisdom to know the difference" about what is within your control and how you can reduce your risk for these diseases. We also want to empower you to share that wisdom with your communities back home which is why we will continue to provide educational materials, draft op-eds and other resources to help you with your personal advocacy efforts.

As part of the ongoing effort to strengthen our cancer prevention community, we are preparing to host a variety of events including a Capitol Hill briefing on the hazards of indoor tanning beds as well as a briefing on the importance of regular annual mammograms after age 40.

We are honored to work with such passionate supporters and we look forward to seeing you at these events. We also hope you will contact us with your ideas on how we can best support you in your cancer prevention efforts both in DC and in your home communities.

Be well,

Lisa McGovern  
Executive Director

## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



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# 2015 PREVENT CANCER ANNUAL SPRING GALA RAISES \$1.6 MILLION DOLLARS

As the snow fell on the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, nothing could keep more than 900 guests from enjoying this year's Prevent Cancer Foundation Gala which is known as one of Washington's best events. This year's theme, as showcased through elegant and authentic décor, food and ambience, celebrated the legendary and contemporary aspects of Ireland. **Her Excellency Ambassador Anne Anderson** graciously served as honorary patron for the evening and welcomed guests to a land of luscious green topiaries, galloping Irish horse garden sculptures and even traditional Irish dancers. Ambassador Anderson set the tone for the event, remarking that Ireland is determined to prevent cancer at every turn, most notably by the adoption of a new National Cancer Strategy with the goal of becoming completely tobacco free by 2025.

Honored guests included several Members of Congress and congressional spouses such as **Senator Patrick and Marcelle Leahy, Representative Mark and Debbie Meadows, Representative Jim and Lisa McGovern, Mrs. Barbara Long, and Mrs. Bobbi Barrasso. Former Congressman Jim Moran** as

well as **former Congressmen Norman Dicks, and John Tanner** were also in attendance with their wives and longtime Foundation supporters **Suzie Dicks and Betty Ann Tanner**. Many friends from the diplomatic community also came to the event including **Ambassador Elin Suleymanov and Lala Abdurahimova of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ambassador Claudio and Laura Denise Bisogniero of Italy, Ambassador Rudolf and Gabrielle Bekink of the Netherlands and Ambassador Martin and Anita Dahinden of Switzerland.**

**Former Senator and Governor of Idaho Dirk Kempthorne**, a special guest at the event, came to honor the 2015 Cancer Champion **Senator Mike Crapo**, who has committed himself personally and professionally to addressing the burden of cancer. Additionally, former WJLA anchor **Greta Kreuz** and Fox News correspondent **Jennifer Griffin** inspired attendees to honor **Michele Conley**, who lost her life to breast cancer last year, through the "Lighting the Way" donation drive.

**Save the date for March 11, 2016 for next year's Gala!**



Left to right: Ambassador Martin and Anita Dahinden, Laura Denise Bisogniero, Ambassador Anne Anderson, Bo Aldigé, Greta Kreuz, Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero



Left to right: Suzie Dicks, Debbie Meadows, Betty Ann Tanner



Left to right: Dr. James Mulshine, Dr. Gary Gordon, Lisa McGovern, Suzie Dicks, Rep. Jim McGovern



Left to right: Former Rep. Jim Moran, Lala Abdurahimova with husband Ambassador Elin Suleymanov



Left to right: Kaleen Long, Barbara Long



Left to right: Sen. Patrick and Marcelle Leahy, Bo Aldigé



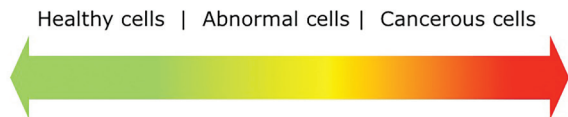
## Lifestyle Matters

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While most people think we are healthy until we are sick...



...we actually live on a spectrum of health



**OUR LIFESTYLE CHOICES IMPACT US  
AT EVERY POINT ON THE HEALTH SPECTRUM**

May of 2007 called the Fungenut Study. It examined the effect that a rye-pasta based diet had on insulin resistance versus the effect an oat-wheat-potato diet had on insulin resistance. Making this one simple dietary change produced measurable benefits that were seen in just 12 weeks. Small changes over time do make a difference.

Because of the sedentary workforce of today, Dr. Nelson also encouraged regular exercise most days of the week. The key is to build fitness into your life so that it is enjoyable and contributes to your overall physical and mental wellbeing.

A gifted communicator, Dr. Nelson effectively wove leading-edge scientific data throughout her presentation and kept her audience, which included Members of Congress and congressional spouses, interested and engaged.



Left to right: Patricia McKeon, Bo Aldigé, Dr. Lisa Nelson, Lisa McGovern, Patricia Garamendi, Brenda Fleishmann

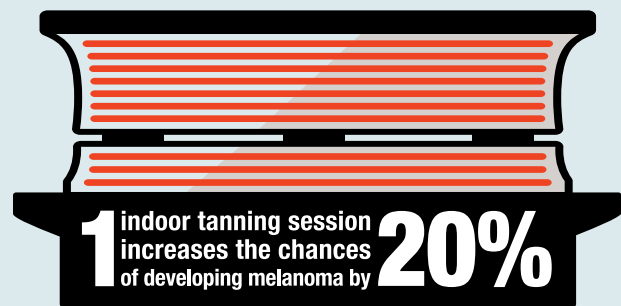
## The Deadly Truth about Tanning

At minimum, lounging in the sun or baking in tanning beds will prematurely and rapidly age the skin causing wrinkles, blemishes, spots, sagging and dry skin. It can also burn and blister skin and cause serious damage to eyes. At worst, that "glow" that so many people seek can cause cancer and kill.

Although skin cancer is highly preventable, it is also the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States, with more than five million people treated each year. The most deadly form of skin cancer, melanoma, kills 9,000 Americans each year and is diagnosed in more than 63,000 people. Each year, we pay more than \$8 billion dollars to treat this disease. Most troubling, though, is that skin cancer is on the rise.

Although fair-skinned people are at greatest risk for skin cancer, no one is immune and those with darker skin tend to catch their cancer at later stages, when it is more difficult to treat. One of the most challenging populations to convince about the dangers of tanning is young women, who are particularly prone to the use of indoor tanning beds. Over the past 40 years, melanoma incidence has increased 800 percent among young women ages 18 to 39, which is attributed to the persistent use of indoor tanning devices.

Tanning beds recently received a black box warning label from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is the sternest warning issued by the agency. It allows for strengthened oversight and indicates that the devices should not be used by anyone under the age of 18. Tanning beds emit intense UV radiation and indoor tanning heightens the risk of melanoma by 59 percent, which goes up with each use.



There is no such thing as a safe tan and temporary vanity can cause serious lifelong health repercussions. Once melanoma has metastasized, which means it has spread to other parts of the body, it is not curable.

Everyone should practice sun safety, consistently slathering on broad spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30+) and wearing protective clothing and eyewear. Indoor tanning should always be avoided and, for children under 18, use of these devices should simply be banned.

To explore the hazards of indoor tanning in greater depth, the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program will co-host a Capitol Hill briefing on Wednesday, May 20th. We will report on our discussion in our fall newsletter.

## Marcelle Leahy, Barbara Long and Sarah Pallone join Executive Council

The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program is led with the invaluable guidance of a bipartisan, bicameral Executive Council of 13 dynamic women. The Council is designed to be ethnically, politically and geographically diverse in order to generate a variety of thoughts, viewpoints and ideas. Each of our members brings their personal passion to our mission. We are honored to welcome our newest members:



**Marcelle Leahy**, spouse of **Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.)**, is a registered nurse and has been a longtime champion of cancer prevention. Having personally battled melanoma, Marcelle is especially passionate about skin cancer prevention and sun safety. She effectively raises awareness about skin cancer and other cancers in her home state of Vermont

and nationwide through monthly op-eds, public speaking engagements and community outreach. Marcelle also serves on the Prevent Cancer Foundation's Board of Directors as a Sustaining Director.



**Barbara Long**, spouse of **Representative Billy Long (R-Mo.)**, became active in the Congressional Families Program immediately upon entering the congressional community. She has attended numerous events hosted by both the Program and the Prevent Cancer Foundation, published op-eds and educated herself and others about these diseases. Like many of us, her family has been touched by cancer, making our mission personal for Barbara and driving her commitment to the Program. She has also learned a great deal from her daughter, who will graduate from medical this year to practice as a pediatrician.



**Sarah Hospodor-Pallone**, spouse of **Representative Frank Pallone (D-N.J.)**, is a dedicated supporter of the Congressional Families Program. Sarah has been instrumental in planning several cancer prevention briefings held on Capitol Hill on topics ranging from the disparities in health services to women veterans to the hazards of indoor tanning beds. As a former Deputy Associate Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Sarah has a special interest in environmental factors and their possible relationship to cancer and other diseases.

**Thank you to our entire Executive Council: María-Elena Carrión, Pamela Dent, Suzie Dicks, Representative Debbie Dingell, Barbara Grassley, Marty Hinojosa, Barbara Morris-Lent, Marie Royce, Alfredia Scott and Betty Ann Tanner. We are grateful for the hard work of these members along with the more than 200 spouses on our Advisory Committee.**

## WOMEN VETERANS DESERVE BETTER HEALTH CARE



Our nation observed Veterans Day on November 11, 2014, to celebrate, honor and appreciate the service of all U.S.

**veterans. Two days later the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program joined with Disruptive Women in Health Care to co-host a Capitol Hill briefing to explore the disparities and disservice in women veteran health care and cancer prevention.**

Congressional Families Program Director **Lisa McGovern** joined Disruptive Women in Health Care Founder **Robin Strongin** to introduce the distinguished panel that included **Rep. Tim Walz (MN)**, Emmy award-winning filmmaker **Patty Lee Stotter** and Director of Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs **Alfie Alvarado**. Congressional Families Program Executive Council Member **Sarah Pallone** was integral in convening this dynamic panel.

Rep. Walz, who served 24 years in the Army National Guard, sits on the Veterans Affairs Committee and is the highest ranking enlisted soldier ever to serve in Congress. The Congressman discussed challenges faced by women veterans who seek quality and timely care and steps lawmakers are taking to eliminate disparities.

Filmmaker Patty Lee Stotter shared stories that inspired her documentary "Service: When Women Come Marching Home," which highlights the conditions our women veterans have endured, such as unsanitary exam rooms, facilities without cancer screening equipment, lack of access to female health care providers and long wait times.

Alfie Alvarado, a veteran herself, closed the panel. She shared that there is a growing number of women in the military; in fact, 20 percent of all new military recruits and 15 percent of active duty members are women. Alvarado is working hard to improve veteran benefits and care in the state of Washington through a variety of specific initiatives.

The audience of 60 included more than 20 congressional spouses.

## CONGRESSIONAL FAMILIES MISSION AND HISTORY

The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program is a nonpartisan outreach effort of congressional families who have joined forces to spread the message of early detection of preventable cancers. Specifically, we focus on raising awareness to prevent breast, cervical, colorectal, lung, oral, prostate, skin and testicular cancers.

The program was founded in 1991 by the Congressional Club in partnership with the Prevent Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit saving lives through cancer prevention and early detection.

Our advisory committee consists of more than 200 spouses of Members of Congress, the Administration and the Supreme Court. Advisory committee members receive copies of our newsletters, are invited to seminars and are kept abreast of news and initiatives related to healthy living and cancer prevention. We encourage our advisory committee members to engage in activities in their home states, nationwide and internationally and we support them in those efforts.

To join the Congressional Families advisory committee, fax, mail or email the following information to the address below: your name, congressional district, preferred phone number, fax number and email address.

**Early detection saves lives.  
Please join us.**



**Editor** Monique Smaby

**Assistant Editor** Lisa McGovern

### Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program

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Are you receiving Lisa's e-mails with invitations to special events? Please contact her at [lisa.mcgovern@preventcancer.org](mailto:lisa.mcgovern@preventcancer.org) or call her at 703-519-2113.



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