

July 14, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Submitted electronically: Secretary@HHS.gov

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

The American College of Radiology (ACR) ¹ encourages HHS to launch a public health awareness campaign to promote annual lung cancer screening for individuals at high risk of developing the disease. More than 230,000 people in the United States will be diagnosed with lung cancer this year, and approximately 125,000 will die from the disease.² Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in the United States, claiming more lives annually than breast, prostate, and colorectal cancers combined.

A significant number of lung cancer deaths could be prevented if current screening recommendations were adopted, allowing for early detection of lung cancer at its most treatable stages. The life-saving benefits of low dose CT (LDCT) screening in at-risk populations are well documented; in fact, 20-30% more lives could be saved if high-risk patients were referred for regular screening.³ Accordingly, LDCT screening of high-risk individuals is recommended by the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, the American College of Surgeon's Commission on Cancer, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, and many other medical and scientific organizations.

Although Medicare and nearly all private payers cover lung cancer screening, public awareness of this life-saving screening benefit is woefully low. As of the most recent data from 2024, the lung cancer screening rate in the U.S. is approximately 16% among eligible individuals.⁴ While this marks a significant increase from previous years, up from just 4.5% in 2023, this still means 84% of eligible individuals are not being screened and are missing opportunities for early

¹ The ACR is a professional association representing more than 40,000 physicians practicing diagnostic radiology, interventional radiology, radiation oncology, and nuclear medicine, as well as medical physicists.

² American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2025. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2025.

³ Rolle LD, Olazagasti C, Lopes G, Rodriguez E, Crane TE. USPSTF Lung Cancer Screening Guidelines and Disparities in Screening Adherence. JAMA Oncol. [Published online](#). March 20, 2025. doi:10.1001/jamaoncol.2025.0230

⁴ American Lung Associations (ALA) report: [2024 State of Lung Cancer](#). Retrieved July 8, 2025.



detection. We believe a public health awareness campaign targeted at patients and providers would have a profound positive impact in lung cancer screening uptake and thus help improve outcomes from one of the deadliest forms of cancer.

A recent study found that conducting a shared decision-making (SDM) visit with patients was associated with significantly higher lung cancer adherence over time.⁵ The CMS National Coverage Determination for Lung Cancer Screening with LDCT includes a mandatory shared decision-making (SDM) visit before the first screening. This new evidence could be leveraged in national campaigns to raise awareness of both lung screening and the importance of SDM in routine clinical care. These campaigns also align with the Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2025 (H.R. 2319), bi-partisan legislation introduced in Congress directing HHS to evaluate access to preventive services & screening and identify opportunities to launch a national public education campaign on early detection.⁶

We believe the Department has a unique opportunity and responsibility to increase public awareness of LDCT and encourage its adoption. We would welcome the chance to collaborate with your team in such an effort. Please contact Cynthia Moran, ACR Executive Vice President of Government Relations, Economics and Health Policy, at (202) 223-1670 or cmoran@acr.org with questions or to let us know how we might be of assistance. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Dana Smetherman, MD, MPH, MBA, FACR, FSBI
Chief Executive Officer
American College of Radiology

⁵ Chung, Y., Liu, C., Rula, E. Y., Dako, F., Carlos, R. C., Lee, R. K., & Christensen, E. (2025). Association of Shared Decision-Making with Long-term Adherence to Lung Cancer Screening. CHEST. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chest.2025.06.026>

⁶ Text - H.R.2319 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act of 2025. (2025, April 29). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2319/text>