

MEDIA CONTACT:

Donald Wilson

DWPR

dwilson@dw-pr.com

(310) 428-4730

HIRSHBERG FOUNDATION FOR PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH

Backgrounder and Pancreatic Cancer Fact Sheet

OUR PURPOSE

The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is focused on finding a cure for pancreatic cancer, and empowering patients and families whose lives are touched by this disease. Founded in 1997, the Hirshberg Foundation funds groundbreaking scientific research, provides patient education and support, and sustains hope that this cancer will be eradicated once and for all.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Awarded 120 Seed Grants to new investigators and expanded program to 51 medical research institutions in the U.S. and internationally.
- Funded researchers who have received millions of dollars in NIH grants.
- Established the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, an integrated practice unit where patients can receive extensive evaluation and a personalized treatment plan in just one visit.
- Promoted the collaboration of investigators from different disciplines with a shared goal of finding a cure.
- Raised more than \$35 million for pancreatic cancer research and education.
- Hosted more than 85 fundraising events to raise awareness and fund pancreatic cancer research.
- Presented the Agi Hirshberg Symposium at UCLA since 2002 for patients and families.
- Granted more than \$1.2 million in financial assistance for patients.
- Provided support and guidance to thousands of patients and their families.
- Supported the American Pancreatic Association, Japan Pancreas Society, and the European Pancreatic Club's annual meetings.
- Partnered with the World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition to raise global awareness.

The Hirshberg Foundation's dedicated efforts have significantly raised awareness and understanding about pancreatic cancer, a disease that continues to be one of the most fatal and least well-funded of all cancer types. Its continued funding of basic and translational research offers an opportunity for life extension, better treatment options, and eventually, a cure. The staff assists patients and families upon receiving the initial diagnosis of pancreatic cancer by providing doctor referrals across the U.S.; second opinion referrals; treatment facility referrals; nutritional information; financial aid information and emotional support resources for patients, families and caregivers. Additionally, the Hirshberg Foundation utilizes its extensive support network by acting as a liaison to connect people with others who share identical journeys from beginning to end. For more information, visit www.pancreatic.org.



2024 PANCREATIC CANCER FACTS

- In 2024, an estimated 66,440 new cases of pancreatic cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. and 51,750 people will die from the disease.
- **Pancreatic cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related death** in the United States surpassing breast cancer.
- Signs and symptoms of pancreatic cancer, which usually do not appear until the disease is advanced, can include weight loss, abdominal pain that may radiate to the back, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes), nausea, and vomiting.
- Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. **For all stages combined, the 5-year relative survival rate is 13%, a number increasing incrementally since 2021.** Even for the small percentage (15%) of people diagnosed with local disease, the 5-year survival is only 44%.
- Risk factors: **People who smoke cigarettes have about twice the risk** of pancreatic cancer as non-smokers. Use of smokeless tobacco also increases risk. **Other risk factors include type 2 diabetes, excess body weight, a family history of pancreatic cancer, and a personal history of chronic pancreatitis.** Heavy alcohol consumption may increase risk. Individuals with certain genetic syndromes, including Lynch syndrome, as well as BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers, are also at increased risk.
- Surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy are treatment options that may extend survival and/or relieve symptoms, but seldom produce a cure. **Fewer than 20% of patients are candidates for surgery because the cancer has usually spread beyond the pancreas at diagnosis.** For those who do undergo surgery, postoperative treatment with chemotherapy (and sometimes radiation) may lower the risk of recurrence and might help people live longer. For advanced disease, chemotherapy, sometimes along with a targeted therapy drug, may be used; a small number of patients might be eligible for immunotherapy.
- Pancreatic cancer is a leading cause of cancer death largely because there are no detection tools to diagnose the disease in its early stages when surgical removal of the tumor is still possible.

**Source for statistics: American Cancer Society: Cancer Facts & Figures 2024*

The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is a California charitable, non-profit corporation. It is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The federal tax ID number for the foundation (EIN) is 95-4640311. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.