

Liver Cancer: Prevalence, Risk Factors and Strategies for Prevention and Treatment

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12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2044

Welcome and Opening Remarks:

Ivory Allison, National Senior Director of Community Impact, American Liver Foundation

Good afternoon and welcome to American Liver Foundation's Congressional Briefing, Liver Cancer: Prevalence, Risk Factors and Strategies for Prevention and Treatment.

I am Ivory Allison, National Senior Director of Community Impact. I am stepping in for our CEO, Lorraine Stiehl who unfortunately had a last-minute conflict. Thank you all for joining us today. I'm excited to be here to raise awareness and speak to you about liver cancer. Before we begin, I want to express our gratitude to Congressman Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania and his office for helping us arrange today's important discussion. Thank you for your continued support of liver health and patients.

We are excited to have Congressman Don Bacon of Nebraska here with us, along with Mark Dreiling, Chief of Staff for Congressman Bacon. We will hear from them both shortly and we are grateful for their support of liver patients.

ALF has been at the forefront of liver health for 50 years. As the largest patient advocacy organization for people with liver disease, we strive to address the rising incidence of liver disease in the U.S. Through our website, free helpline, social media platforms, webinars and community events, we reached more than six million people in 2024 with health education and support services.

Our mission encompasses educating patients, families, caregivers, healthcare professionals, advocating for patient rights, funding medical research and promoting public awareness campaigns about liver health. We are honored to serve as a trusted voice for all patients and families affected by liver disease.

Today we're here to discuss liver cancer, which is the 13th most common type of cancer in the U.S. Surprisingly 40,000 Americans are diagnosed with new cases of liver cancer annually. In the U.S., liver cancer incidence and mortality are approximately one and a half to two times higher in American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, African American and Black, and Hispanic/Latino populations compared to White individuals.

Given these statistics, I encourage everyone here to find out if you are at risk. American Liver Foundation has developed a liver cancer quiz that helps determine if you may be at risk. This free

quiz is available in English and Spanish at thinkliverthinklife.org/quiz and we also have a QR code on the agenda that you can scan. We hope that you will share the link to the quiz with your colleagues and constituents so they too can find out if they are at risk.

Most cases of liver cancer occur in people with an underlying liver disease such as metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), chronic hepatitis B and C, cirrhosis, or autoimmune liver diseases, among many others.

As we think about how best to support people with liver cancer, we must focus on policy efforts. Legislation introduced in this congress can help support liver cancer patients by improving access to treatment options and reducing financial barriers. Obesity increases the risk of MASLD and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH) both of which can progress to liver cancer. The ***Treat and Reduce Obesity Act*** (TROA) would expand coverage of anti-obesity medications, helping address obesity rates and reduce downstream burden of liver disease.

We know liver cancer patients may rely on expensive medications, including targeted therapies or immunotherapies. The ***Help Copays Act*** makes medications more affordable, helping liver cancer patients stay on treatment without financial hardship.

Additionally, the ***Safe Step Act*** would reduce delays in getting patients the best treatment options faster.

By making living organ donation safer, more accessible, and removing financial barriers, the ***Living Donor Protection Act*** and ***Honor Our Living Donors Act*** increases the availability of transplants, which are sometimes the only hope for patients dealing with a liver cancer diagnosis.

We must raise awareness about liver disease and liver cancer, in children and young people, which is why we are proud to support the ***Ian Kalvinskas Pediatric Liver Cancer Early Detection and Screening Act***. This bill directs the Government Accountability Office to study early detection and treatment of pediatric liver tumors and trends in pediatric liver-transplant wait-list mortality. It also establishes a national education initiative led by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), to provide families plain-language information on early warning signs and the option and safety of living liver donation.

These bipartisan bills help address challenges liver patients face and if enacted could make a significant difference in the treatment options and quality of care received.

Before I introduce our speakers, I would like to express our sincerest thanks to our sponsors Merck, Eisai, and Helio Genomics. We sincerely appreciate your partnership which enables us to deliver this important briefing today.

Now, I'm excited to introduce our speakers. First, I'm honored to introduce one of ALF's champions, Congressman Don Bacon. Congressman Bacon spent nearly 30 years on active duty in the U. S. Air Force, culminating his military career at the rank of Brigadier General. Congressman Bacon was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2016, representing Nebraska's Second Congressional District where he serves on the House Agriculture Committee and the House Armed Services Committee, as Chairman of the Cyber, Information Technologies, and Innovation subcommittee. He is dedicated to supporting liver patients and we are fortunate he could join us today! I am thrilled to introduce Mark Dreiling, Chief of Staff to Congressman Bacon and a liver transplant patient, Phil Shin, ALF board member and liver cancer survivor, Dr. Allison Martin, Assistant Professor of Surgery Assistant Professor in Population Health Sciences at Duke University School of Medicine, Dr. Viviana Figueroa Diaz, Assistant Professor, New York University Grossman School of Medicine, Clinical lead for the Spanish liver program and women's liver health at NYU, and Evelyn Rivera, ALF Advocacy Ambassador and liver cancer survivor from New Mexico. Also, I'd like to give a special acknowledgement to Darryl Ellis, Advocacy Ambassador and liver cancer survivor from North Carolina who could not be with us today.

ALF's vision is a world without liver disease. Thank you all for attending this briefing! To start off, I'm honored to introduce Congressman Bacon of Nebraska.

CLOSING REMARKS

Thank you all for being here today! We learned a lot from each of our speakers. Please consider American Liver Foundation as a resource. Our website, www.liverfoundation.org, contains a lot of valuable information about liver health. We hope you will reach out to us if you have any questions in the future. Thank you all for taking the time out of your day to join us. Thank you again to our sponsors and of course our speakers.