How can we see the most complete picture of cancer?

Cancer registries measure progress in preventing and treating cancer, a leading cause of death in the U.S. Without cancer registries, our efforts against cancer would be guesswork. Cancer registries target action so we know how best to use our resources and if our efforts are paying off.

U.S. POPULATION COVERED

CDC’s National Program of Cancer Registries includes 97% of all cancer cases in the United States. Combined with NCI’s SEER program, federal cancer data cover 100% of the United States population.

CASES RECORDED

This means that every single cancer* diagnosed is recorded. That’s more than 1.6 million new cases each year.

Cancer data for states and the nation:

**WHO**

is getting cancer (for instance, by race, age, or sex)?

**WHAT**

types of cancer are increasing or decreasing?

**WHERE**

will prevention efforts have the biggest impact?

**WHEN**

are screening or prevention strategies working?

**HOW**

far has the cancer spread, and are we catching cancer early?
With cancer registries, lawmakers can see if certain policies have had an impact, such as -

- Improving access to diagnose and treat cancer earlier, when it’s more effective and costs less
- Encouraging healthy behaviors (like vaccinations, exercising, or quitting smoking) that lead to fewer people getting cancer

Doctors can tell cancer patients how long people with a certain type of cancer tend to live after diagnosis and if they may qualify for clinical trials.

Researchers can find risk factors and places where more cancers happen or determine what treatments work best.

Cancer registries help target action:

- Public health programs can figure out the success of cancer interventions and do more of what works.
- CDC can expand cancer control efforts that work best and focus resources on people and communities with the greatest need.

Registry data are essential to CDC’s cancer prevention programs.

For instance, CDC’s National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection, Colorectal Cancer Control, and National Comprehensive Cancer Control Programs use cancer registry data to find out which counties need more screening. Using cancer registry data, planners focus activities in places that need it most. That means more cancers can be caught and treated early, leading to fewer deaths.

* Cancer registries collect data on all cancer sites and non-malignant tumors of the brain and central nervous system, except basal and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin and noninvasive cancer of the cervix.