



H.E.R.O. Initiative
fighting for health equity

How we Fight: Addressing Disparities & Advancing Health Equity in Illinois

Cancer affects everyone, but it doesn't affect everyone equally.

Health equity means everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, find, treat, and survive cancer.



DISCOVERY

Our innovative research takes place in a lab, but its impact is felt by people in all communities. By helping produce better and more accessible treatments, finding causes of cancer, and improving quality of life, we can fight cancer before it appears and create better outcomes when it does.

ACS DISPARITIES RESEARCH GRANTS

TOTAL INVESTMENT (SINCE 1999)
\$320M+

CURRENT INVESTMENT (U.S.)
\$52 million

INVESTMENT IN ILLINOIS (SINCE 1999)
\$5,306,800+

ACS CANCER HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH CENTER AWARD

The **University of Illinois Cancer Center** was the first recipient of the ACS Cancer Health Equity Research Center Award, which is conferred to minority-health serving institutions.

ACS DIVERSITY IN CANCER RESEARCH PROGRAM

A new program, launched in 2021, that aims to improve diversity and inclusion in the cancer workforce by increasing the number of cancer researchers, who by race and ethnicity, are currently underrepresented in the field.

University of Chicago was one of the first institutional recipients awarded.



ADVOCACY

Through our nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN, we're fighting cancer right in city hall, the statehouse, and Congress in order to build healthier communities, create safer workplaces, and provide affordable access to quality medical care for everyone.

BIOMARKER TESTING

ACS led a coalition of partners, including the **University of Illinois Cancer Center**, **Northwestern**, and **University of Chicago**, to make Illinois the first state in the nation to pass biomarker legislation. That legislation has now taken effect.

Biomarker testing is an essential step in accessing precision medicine treatments. Dubbed 'the right treatment, to the right patient, at the right time,' precision medicine plays a critical role in improving cancer outcomes.

PROTECTING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Improving access to health insurance and protecting provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that specifically aid people of color, who are more likely to be diagnosed at advanced stages of disease and less likely to receive or complete treatment.

PREDICTING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Illinois House Bill 1745 passed to ensure patients have the ability to plan and predict their prescription drug costs. Illinois is the first state to pass this type of legislation.



PATIENT SUPPORT

ACS provides a 24/7 helpline, free rides to appointments, and free places to stay when traveling to treatment. We also educate health care providers to increase screening, provide more effective patient support services, and offer greater access to treatments.

ILLINOIS RAPID IMPACT GRANTS 2021

TRANSPORTATION	LODGING
\$77,600	\$150,000

SYSTEMS CHANGE

ACS partnered with clinical leaders at Stroger Hospital to analyze unmet transportation needs among its oncology patients and implemented a customized logistics platform to request, deliver, and report on rides.

RIDES PER MONTH	RIDES PER YEAR
5,000+	66,000+

Systems change and staff training is expected to reduce missed/delayed appointments, improve treatment compliance, improve outcomes, and increase reimbursement for eligible services.

ACS MEALS PROGRAM

Starting in April 2020, ACS and Factor have delivered 56,000+ healthy, prepacked meals to cancer patients in treatment at 21 area hospitals.

MEALS (2021)	MEALS (2020)
33,556	21,744

As of January 2022, **three** more hospital systems have joined the program and will be receiving free meals for their cancer patients.

[Learn more at acsheroes.org](https://www.acsheroes.org)