



## Advancing Collaboration with Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program®

### Approach to Collaboration

The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program® is a program of the Prevent Cancer Foundation® that was created 30 years ago. This unique program is a product of collaboration between two organizations: The Prevent Cancer Foundation and the Congressional Club, a bipartisan organization for congressional spouses. The Program has grown to include families of Senate, House, Cabinet, Supreme Court, and the Diplomatic Corps; it includes collaborations with representatives, senators, and government and non-government partners to raise awareness about cancer prevention and early detection. We work with other organizations and partners to provide evidence-based, expert-led education for our primary stakeholders — congressional spouses and families — and support them in sharing information with their home districts and states.





## Application of the 9 Considerations for Collaboration

### Build Trust

Trust is at the core of what we do. Our longevity and success are due to the trust that congressional spouses have in the Program and the information that we share. Congressional spouses have always led the Program and that has been critical in building trust. We are led by an executive director, Executive Council, and Advisory Committee of congressional spouses who bring unique insight into both the potential and political sensitivities that guide our efforts to amplify the mission of the Prevent Cancer Foundation. We focus solely on outreach and education and do not engage in policy, which allows us to build bipartisan bridges. We have also built a reputation as a trusted source of information, which is critical to our success.

### Have a Vision

Our long-term vision mirrors the mission of the Prevent Cancer Foundation, which is saving lives across all populations through cancer prevention and early detection. The Foundation does this through research, education, outreach, and advocacy; the Congressional Families Program plays an important role in the outreach and educational pieces of that work. We educate and provide tools to congressional spouses and members, who in turn share it with their home districts and states. Together, we have a national impact. We ensure harmony between our vision and that of our collaborators by being mindful of their interests, audiences, and political sensitivities; we create our materials and opportunities to meet their needs.

### Seek to Assure the Success of Your Collaborators

Whether we are collaborating internally with the Foundation or externally with our Program participants and sponsors, communicating and setting expectations is vital. The Congressional Families Program serves as an honest broker between the goals and needs of the Foundation and the congressional community to maximize the potential to reach the public with vital information about cancer prevention and early detection. Our Program participants are volunteers, so it is important to engage them with opportunities to serve and reliable, evidence-based materials.

### Take Stock

We routinely assess our strengths and weaknesses internally — both as a Program and as part of the

Foundation — and externally with our stakeholders. We seek guidance and feedback from our Executive Council and Advisory Committee, which are comprised of congressional spouses. We avail ourselves of outside expertise as needed to create the strongest possible programming and opportunities.

### Start Small

We are fortunate to have a 30-year history to build upon and a reputation for understanding the potential and limitations of our primary audience. There is great confidence that our information is reliable and the opportunities we offer add value to the Foundation, to the congressional community, and to our shared mission to educate the public to prevent cancer.

For some of our initiatives, we first pilot an activity by starting with one or two Program participants — congressional spouses who are invested in the mission. Through this process, we learn what works and what does not to create a model that can be shared with a larger group. Our pilot participants serve as ambassadors for the activity; they are often well known in our community and attract others to engage. We put a high premium on developing and nurturing trust and building relationships with the Program, the Foundation, the congressional community, and the public.

### Fail Fast, and Build Rigorous Feedback Loops

We are in constant communication with our partners, sharing information and inviting input. For example, through our “Posting with a Purpose” initiative, we offer weekly social media posts and open the door to collaboration. We routinely invite feedback from our partners and periodically survey our stakeholders to solicit ideas and guidance.

### Take a Portfolio Approach

Our primary audience is congressional spouses, but we have extended our outreach to include members and staff of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, other congressional family members, and the diplomatic community. In some cases, our participants’ interests move into legislation and policy; in those cases, we make introductions to our policy team, which adds value to the Foundation’s work. We also build upon the trust established through working with our program to showcase Foundation events and invite participation.



## Consider Non-Traditional Partners

Cancer prevention is a wide-ranging issue that affects everyone. We pride ourselves on thinking outside the box. We have collaborated with nutritionists, an expert on the visual and non-visual effects of light, mindfulness experts, and a wide range of groups including Disruptive Women in Healthcare, Lifetime television, Radio Disney, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In off-election years, we collaborate with the National Association of Broadcasters (a Program sponsor) on a cancer prevention Congressional Public Service Announcement. At our annual Action for Cancer Awareness Awards Luncheon, we have honored a varied group of individuals and corporations to bring attention to our work, including Chef José Andrés for his focus on healthy food and good nutrition for all; Sun Bum for

educating young people and making sun safety cool and fun; CVS for taking tobacco off the shelves; the U.S. Department of Defense's Healthy Base Initiative for creating an environment for service members and families that encourages good nutrition, active lifestyles, and tobacco-free living; and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg for inspiring people of every age to exercise.

## Keep Your Donors Apprised of Your Collaborations

Our program is sponsored by a limited number of corporate partners that support our mission and see the value of leveraging the voices of our trusted Program ambassadors to share information and create change. We share quarterly reports of our work with our sponsors to keep them abreast of our activities.

## Future Collaborations

Our ideal collaboration would be with the President, Vice President, and their spouses. They have a national bully pulpit and wide reach. The current President and First Lady have a demonstrated interest in cancer prevention and early detection, so we would love to work with them. The Foundation collaborated with the (now defunct) Biden Cancer Initiative on policy and advocacy — the Congressional Families Program would love to engage the Bidens to bring their personal touch to awareness and education. They could help us reach people of every age, gender, ethnicity, and income level with this lifesaving information. As leaders who have been at the forefront of cancer prevention and early detection for 35 years, we can offer expertise in this often-overlooked area of cancer awareness and research.



Lisa McGovern,  
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## About the Organization

The Prevent Cancer Foundation® is the only U.S.-based nonprofit organization solely dedicated to cancer prevention and early detection. Our mission is to save lives across all populations through cancer prevention and early detection. Our vision is to Stop Cancer Before It Starts!®