



**ABDOMINAL
CANCERS
ALLIANCE**

2025

***IMPACT
REPORT***

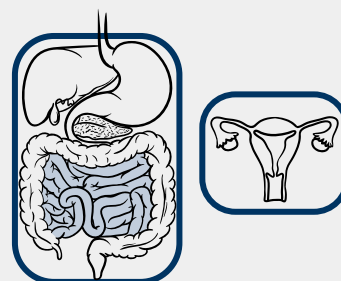
**Abdominal Cancers Alliance is an initiative of
Partners for Cancer Care and Prevention, EIN 45-1605551
501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**

Our Mission

To empower and connect the abdominal cancers community to save and improve lives.

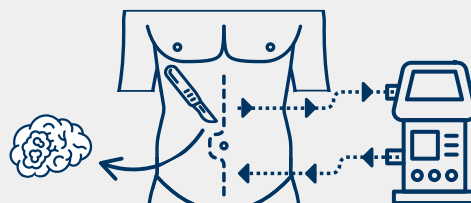
Our Vision

A future where every abdominal cancer patient receives appropriate and timely care throughout their cancer journey.



Peritoneal Malignancies

Focused on advanced-stage cancers, especially gastrointestinal and gynecologic cancers, affecting the peritoneal cavity.



Access to Life-saving Treatments

All patients deserve specialized care. We are raising awareness of specialized treatment options that can help many live longer and better.



Our Commitment

Uniquely dedicated to serving and connecting across the abdominal cancer community.



National Reach

Headquartered in Baltimore, but reaching across the nation (and far beyond!)

A Message from the Executive Director

In 2025, the Abdominal Cancers Alliance continued to grow as a trusted source for awareness, connection, and navigation for people facing rare and advanced abdominal (or “peritoneal”) cancers. This report reflects a year of meaningful progress: expanding our Resource Library that translates important medical information into accessible language, creating a nationwide directory of CRS/HIPEC specialists, establishing our Medical Advisory Board to put diverse peritoneal cancer expertise at the center of our work, strengthening partnership collaborations, and growing the Alliance community, to preview just a few.

Every page of this report reflects the commitment at the heart of the Alliance: people facing rare and advanced abdominal cancers deserve the truth, the right information, and the opportunity to reach appropriate care in time. These cancers are serious and complex, but treatment options and meaningful paths forward do - indeed! - exist. Timing matters. Patient advocacy matters. And accessing specialized expertise in peritoneal cancer can fundamentally change the options available to a patient, and even the course of their life.

That is why we’re working to help patients and families navigate the hardest moments in their lives. Every day, the Alliance walks alongside this community to help them reach the information and specialized care they need. Through educational programs, patient advocacy partnerships, the courageous stories of survivors and caregivers, and personalized navigation, we are replacing fear and isolation with knowledge, connection, and hope.

None of this would be possible without the people who share their experiences, volunteer their time, lend their expertise, support our programs, and raise their voices alongside ours. Together, we are telling the truth about these cancers and ensuring that more patients have the opportunity to find their path forward and fight with confidence. We are grateful - I am grateful! - to every member of this community for being a part of this movement to change the narrative on abdominal cancer diagnoses.



Bo Plantz

Abdominal Cancer Survivor
Executive Director, Abdominal Cancers Alliance

“

**Replacing
fear and
isolation with
knowledge,
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”

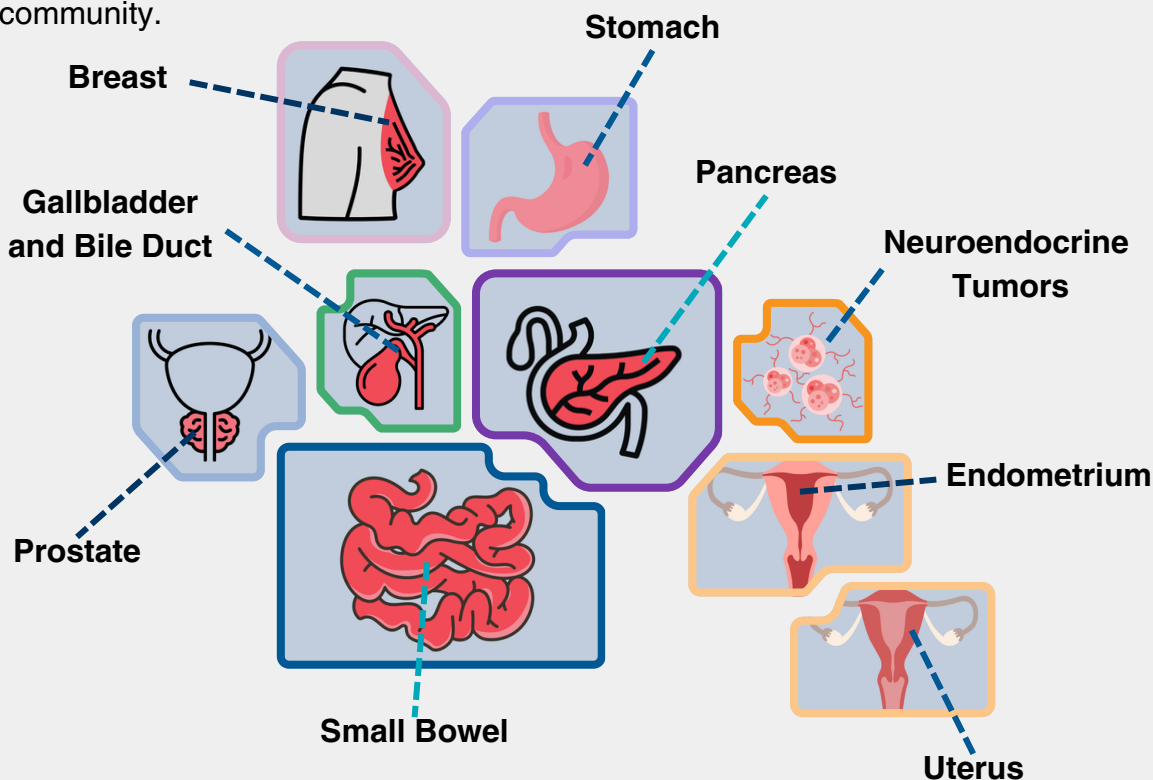


AWARENESS

New Medical Resources

Understanding Peritoneal Carcinomatosis

We continue to expand our Resource Library to help patients and caregivers understand their cancer diagnosis and what they can do about it. And 2025 saw significant growth with **the addition of 9 new peritoneal-diagnosis resources**, several of which are rare for peritoneal spread and therefore **patients and caregivers have few other options for these information resources**. The Alliance is proud to serve as a critical resource hub for this community.



Library of Research

In 2025, we launched a new resource to help our community **keep up with research developments** in abdominal cancers. Our newly established Research Library provides this community with summaries of critical research from the field of peritoneal oncology - curated **insights for survivors and caregivers without the medical jargon**.



AWARENESS

Awareness Campaigns

We are **changing the narrative** around rare and advanced abdominal cancers by ensuring patients, caregivers, and clinicians know that expertise and treatment options exist. **All year long**, our awareness campaigns amplify trusted, patient-centered resources and engage volunteers to **extend our reach** to both the public and healthcare providers.

Did You Know?

Notable risk factors for ovarian cancers include:

- age, most cases are diagnosed between ages 50-60
- lifestyle choices, like smoking and obesity
- In



Second opinions save lives.

Check out our resource on the benefit of seeking multiple medical opinions in your diagnosis and treatment journey



GASTRIC & PANCREATIC



Did You Know?

common signs & symptoms of appendix cancer include:

- abdominal pain or bloating
- appendicitis
- "jelly belly"
- Unexplained weight gain/loss



Cancer Awareness



weCan

Abdominal Cancers Alliance
allied against advanced gastrointestinal and gynecologic cancers

Peer Campaigns Driving Awareness!

And in 2025 we launched a new peer-to-peer platform to mobilize members of our community who want to **drive awareness AND fuel our mission**.

By sharing their story and connecting their networks - together - we raised more than \$50,000!



Join the Campaign!

AWARENESS

Stories of Hope

In 2025, 18 extraordinary survivors and caregivers shared their abdominal cancer journeys with the world. Their stories remind us of how important it is to advocate for ourselves to access the care we need!



Nicole Ziccardi

More than ten years ago in a patient room at the surgeon's office with her newborn son, Nicole received devastating news: she was diagnosed with mucinous neoplasm of the appendix - **appendix cancer**. Numb with shock, they went home to figure out how they were going to fight it.

"My baby boy saved my life!"

Tamron Little

Tamron Little was diagnosed with **peritoneal mesothelioma** just months after becoming a mother, and was **initially told she had only 18 months to live**. After finding a specialist, she underwent CRS/HIPEC surgery and is now an **almost 20-year survivor**. She uses her story to raise awareness, encourage research, and give others hope.

"You are stronger than you know. Thriving is possible!"



Kristin Logan

After years of **unexplained symptoms and misdiagnoses**, Kristin was finally diagnosed with **Stage 4A high-grade serous ovarian cancer**. By that time, her body was in poor condition, but with the support of her loved ones, medical team, and a determination to keep going, **she found the strength to face what came next**.

"If I could go back in time, I would have been a better advocate for myself earlier."



[Share Your Story](#)

AWARENESS

Allies in Action

From coast to coast, folks are hearing about what we're doing and pitching in to make sure that more patients and caregivers get to the care they need.

These Allies are taking action to make a difference!



Cure for Cancer Classic

Presented by volunteers with Guilford Hall Brewery and Wilhelm Builders, this event was held in loving memory of Chuck Phillips, an abdominal cancer patient, community advocate, and Executive Vice President of KCI Technologies. The event was a beautiful demonstration of how **important and valuable it is to come together** to support a shared cause!



Rick Sell: Peer-to-Peer Ally

There is deep power in community, and Rick is a prime example of that! Translating his own experience with abdominal cancer into action, Rick joined our first Abdominal Cancers Awareness Peer-to-Peer campaign to **bring attention to our cause through his community!**



Melanie Leeson: Advocate for Change

In addition to sharing her story of hope, Melanie Leeson leverages her experience and her voice to urge patients to practice urgent self-advocacy. Melanie **worked with media and advocacy outlets** in British Columbia and Canada to **spotlight the realities and barriers** faced by people diagnosed with peritoneal cancers.

Get Involved

We're excited to be growing, and we need your voice! You too can join up and get involved to make a difference here:

[Join the Movement](#)

AWARENESS

Around the Globe

Abdominal cancers know no borders, and neither does our cause. In 2025, the Alliance strengthened our global community through new partnerships and shared educational resources in Australia, Nigeria, and Europe. Patients and caregivers across the world are helping spread awareness, support, and hope. Read their stories and learn about the organizations making a difference.



Alli Bannister: Using her Platform in Australia

Appendix cancer survivor Alli Bannister is using her voice to **help others recognize the signs of abdominal cancers and advocate for themselves**. Through her personal story, social media platform, and patient advocacy efforts, she encourages people to trust their instincts, seek additional medical opinions, and find specialized care. Alli is raising awareness, empowering patients, and helping improve outcomes for others facing these rare cancers.

Joseph Vaakaa: Cancer Care in Nigeria

Following the loss of his mother to colon cancer, Joseph Vaakaa turned grief into action by founding the Mbakuran Vaakaa Cancer (MVC) Foundation in Nigeria. Through **community outreach, cancer education, free screenings, patient navigation, and advocacy for earlier diagnosis**, Joseph is helping raise awareness of abdominal cancers and improving access to lifesaving information and support across underserved communities.



Antonia Dyroff: Raising Awareness in Europe

In Switzerland, Antonia Dyroff is transforming her own experience with pseudomyxoma peritonei (PMP) into a movement of awareness and support. After **recognizing the lack of resources for patients** in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, she founded **a regional patient network, launched a dedicated support group, and helps maintain an educational website** that connects patients and families with trusted information. Through her advocacy, Antonia is ensuring that more people facing abdominal cancers find community, hope, and the specialized resources they need.



Join the Movement

CONNECTION

Medical Advisory Board

In 2025, we established our Medical Advisory Board. Our Advisory Board members represent **leading experts in the research, treatment, and management of rare and advanced abdominal cancers**. They play a vital role in advancing the Abdominal Cancers Alliance mission by:

- Offering expert guidance on educational resources, including the diagnosis and treatment of rare and advanced abdominal cancers and translating research into clear, accessible information.
- Helping to connect the Alliance across the community.
- Championing the Alliance's work through education, awareness, and professional outreach.
- Helping to build a trusted network of specialists and centers for peritoneal surface malignancies, and encouraging patients to seek multiple consultations for the best care.



Dr. Armando Sardi
Mercy Medical Center
Baltimore, MD



Dr. Maheswari Senthil
UCI Health
Orange County, CA



Dr. Jason Foster
UN Medical Center
Omaha, NE



Dr. Vadim Gushchin
Mercy Medical Center
Baltimore, MD



Dr. Haroon Choudry
UPMC Hillman Cancer Center
Pittsburgh, PA



Dr. Sameer Patel
UC Medical Center
Cincinnati, OH



Dr. Edward Levine
Atrium Health Wake Forest
Winston-Salem, NC



Dr. Peter Ledakis
Mercy Medical Center
Baltimore, MD

CONNECTION

Partner Organizations

Partnership and collaboration are fundamental to our mission. We all have strengths and bring value to patients and caregivers on the cancer journey, and we were proud to build with new partners in 2025!



Colorectal Cancer Prevention Network

The Colorectal Cancer Prevention Network (CCPN) is dedicated to reducing colorectal cancer through awareness, education, and screening. They provide free colorectal cancer screening to individuals residing in the Carolinas who are uninsured and low income.

crcfacts.com

Heat It to Beat It

Heat It To Beat It is an annual event to raise awareness and support research for the life-saving HIPEC treatment for peritoneal carcinomatosis. Since its inception in 2009, Heat It to Beat It has raised over \$3M to support research at Mercy Medical Center.

heatit.org



Hitting Cancer Below the Belt

Hitting Cancer Below the Belt is a colon health and colorectal cancer prevention nonprofit moving communities from awareness to action through engaging education and timely screening. From its inflatable colon across Virginia to school programs and early detection funding, HCB2 elevates prevention and saves lives.

HCB2.org

Medical Outreach at the Mesothelioma Center

The Medical Outreach Department at The Mesothelioma Center provides free information, financial assistance, and care navigation for patients with asbestos-related diseases. The team also supports healthcare professionals, reduces barriers to care, and explains legal options to help patients achieve the best possible outcomes.

asbestos.com



National Ovarian Cancer Coalition

The mission of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition is to save lives through the prevention and cure of ovarian cancer. NOCC is committed to empowering the ovarian cancer community by providing critical resources, educational programs, and support services while raising awareness and advancing research.

ovarian.org

PSOGI

The Peritoneal Surface Oncology Group International (PSOGI) is a non-profit organization to promote research, education, and innovations in patient care regarding peritoneal metastases. The outreach is worldwide. The major goal is to implement the transfer of basic science research and clinical research to patient care.

psogi.com



Stef Ripple Foundation

The Stef Ripple Foundation is a (501)(c)(3) nonprofit based in Maryland whose core mission is to provide hope, encouragement, and support for ovarian cancer patients and their families; spread ovarian cancer awareness; and share the principles of Stef's life: be thankful, be helpful, be kind.

stefripple.org

Ulman Foundation

The Ulman Foundation has supported adolescents and young adults with cancer for nearly 30 years. Founded by 19-year-old survivor Doug Ulman, it is now a national leader offering free services, including Ulman House in Baltimore for lodging and personalized patient navigation to support care, treatment, and well-being.

ulmanfoundation.org



NAVIGATION

New Navigation Resources

Find a Specialist

Access to specialized care is critical! That's why in 2025 we launched a new resource to **support patients and caregivers on their cancer journey**: a state-by-state directory of **specialists who perform CRS/HIPEC (Cytoreductive Surgery and Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy)**. This independent database provides verified information about expert providers offering this complex, life-saving procedure across the United States.



Survivorship Resources

The cancer journey is a complicated experience that goes far beyond clinical medicine, and it **doesn't just end after treatment**. The needs of survivors and caregivers across the abdominal cancer journey are many, so in 2025 we created an expansion to our Resource Library with the **addition of survivorship resources**, beginning with Nutrition and Bowel Obstructions!

Nutrition

Proper nutrition is essential for cancer patients. Cancer, and treatments for cancer, can have outsized and swift impacts on our health, including muscle and tissue loss, weight loss/gain, compromised immune systems, numerous imbalances, and a multitude of ways to just not feel good.



Bowel Obstruction



A bowel obstruction (also referred to as an intestinal obstruction or blockage) is a condition in which the intestines (or bowels) becomes blocked. This blockage prevents food, fluids, and waste (stool) from passing normally through the digestive tract. As a result, digestive materials and gas become trapped, which can cause pain, discomfort, and can damage the intestinal tissue.

NAVIGATION

Patient and Caregiver Network

In 2025 we made 85 connections between patients, caregivers, and volunteers eager to be a buddy to support others on their cancer journey. That's **85 deep relationships built, real experiences and nuanced insights shared** - all leveraging the power of community!



85

PATIENT AND CAREGIVER
PEER CONNECTIONS

Direct Navigation

We all need different kinds of support on the cancer journey. Some patients and caregivers want someone to listen to them, to ask a question, or to understand the truth that cuts through the noise. That's why in 2025 our team organized a **direct navigation service** to meet those needs. In our first months offering our

Direct Navigation program, we **conducted 176 encounters** - offering personalized care to meet patients, survivors, and caregivers where they are!

Resource Library

For every patient and caregiver, understanding our diagnosis and what we can do about it is critical to finding the right path forward. From there, we can learn about our options, find the care we need, learn insights from experts, and share in hope from others who have come before us. Gaining that understanding is the **critical first step**. In 2025, we were proud to have helped our community navigate **more than 16,000 information barriers** through our Library of Resources!



16k

RESOURCES ACCESSED IN
OUR RESOURCE LIBRARY

Webinars

Late in 2025 we launched a **new webinar series** to take our resources and **expert insights on abdominal cancers and quality of life** directly to the community. These free sessions covered topics of the nuances of treatment for peritoneal carcinomatosis and what to know about hormone replacement therapies and how they can help following major surgery.



EVENTS

Annual Golf Outing

In September we hosted our 16th Annual Golf Outing in Marriottsville, MD! It was a beautiful day for golf, raising awareness, and strengthening our community! We thank everyone who was part of this amazing event. Their generosity not only drove this to be our **biggest annual golf outing ever**, but their generosity fuels our mission to support patients and caregivers throughout the cancer journey.



Drive Out Cancer Golf Challenge

We thank everyone who was part of the Drive Out Cancer Golf Challenge! **Your generous support helps us to deepen our commitment to patients and caregivers fighting the fight**, fueling our work raising awareness, creating connections, and guiding patient navigation. Thank you to all of our event participants, sponsors, and volunteers who made this event happen!



EVENTS

National Cancer Survivors Day

We celebrated National Cancer Survivors Day 2025 with survivors, caregivers, family, and care providers! Together, we shared an evening honoring the **bravery of patients** who waded into the fear of diagnosis and treatment; the **strength of patients and caregivers** alike to weather the challenges of dealing with cancer, on top of everything else that life has to balance; and the **wisdom they carry** to navigate the mire that is understanding a rare and advanced cancer diagnosis and how to advocate for oneself or a loved one.



Highballs and High Hopes

Highballs and High Hopes was a special afternoon bringing together survivors, caregivers, advocates, and allies in the fight against rare and advanced abdominal cancers. **It wasn't just an event - it was a gathering of strength, storytelling, and activism.** Together, we can reach further, raise our voices louder, and make more survivors who can live a full life!



EVENTS

With Our Partners

National Cancer Survivors Day with Maryland Oncology Hematology



In June, we participated in Maryland Oncology Hematology's NCSD event, joining partner organizations, patients, and caregivers in a day of connection, education, and celebration. We joined in to raise awareness about rare and advanced abdominal cancers, share resources, and engage directly with survivors and their families. Many attendees learned about **treatment options such as CRS/HIPEC** and the importance of seeking care from **peritoneal specialists** for the first time.

Heat It To Beat It

In September, we were proud to join with other survivors, caregivers, and advocates at Heat It To Beat It 2025 in Baltimore. Hosted by Mercy Medical Center, this annual event brings together members of our community to raise funds for research in the fight against abdominal cancers. As always, their resilience is an inspiration and it was **an honor to be with others who shine a light on these rare and advanced abdominal cancers** and lifesaving treatments like cytoreductive surgery (CRS) and HIPEC, giving patients a better chance at more tomorrows.



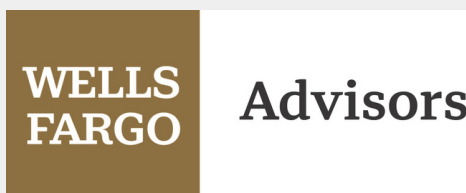
NORD Breakthrough Summit



In October, we **joined advocates, researchers, policymakers, and patient leaders from across the country** at the NORD Breakthrough Summit 2025 in Washington, D.C. Hosted by the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD), the Summit brings together the rare disease community to share insights, build relationships, and drive collaboration toward better outcomes for all rare disease patients.

Business and Institutional Supporters

We are grateful for our friends in industry and the business community, whose deep contributions fuel our mission!





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