



SAVING LIVES AND ADVANCING  
RESEARCH BY EMPOWERING  
THOSE LIVING WITH AND  
AT RISK FOR LUNG CANCER.

[LungCancerAlliance.org](http://LungCancerAlliance.org)

1700 K Street NW, Ste 660  
Washington, DC 20006

January 22, 2019

Representative Tulsi Gabbard  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1433 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gabbard,

As President and CEO of Lung Cancer Alliance (LCA), a leading non-profit health organization dedicated solely to saving lives and improving quality of life for those living with or at risk for lung cancer, I am writing to thank you for your concern for the health and well-being of our military men and women and for your leadership in introducing the Burn Pits Accountability Act. We support the legislation as a first step of ensuring that all those effected by burn pit toxins are accounted for and benefit from actions designed to address associated health issues. LCA also recommends that intensified research to monitor and identify the health consequences of these exposures be taken along with the utilization of effective tools to identify the deadliest and most serious diseases early with effective treatments to save the lives and improve the health of our veterans.

Lung cancer is an urgent priority among veterans. Numerous studies over the years published by the Institute of Medicine, Cancer, Military Medicine, Chest and others have shown that lung cancer incidence and mortality rates are an estimated 25% – 30% higher in the military than in civilian populations. Of growing concern is the lung cancer risk among ground troops deployed during the Gulf Wars whose exposures included asbestos, chromium, diesel exhaust, radon, crystalline silica, pesticides, pollutants and particulate matter from burn pits, oil well fires and the destruction of chemical weapons including sarin gas. Research focused on these veterans is urgently needed. Given lung cancer's long latency period, research projects should incorporate low dose computed tomography scans now that screening has been proven to reduce lung cancer mortality in a high-risk population.

This was evident when on July 29, 2011; the results of an eight year National Lung Screening Trial (NLST) were published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The study found that the 53,000 person randomized controlled trial had proven definitively that screening a population at high risk (55-74 years of age with a 30 pack year history) for lung cancer with low dose computed tomography (LDCT) scans results in 20 percent fewer deaths than screening with chest x-rays. Since lung cancer takes more lives than breast, prostate colon and pancreatic

cancers combined, the impact of a 20 percent reduction in lung cancer deaths will be profound. This is the most significant advance in the history of screening for cancer.

Lung cancer has a disproportionate impact on veterans, especially those exposed to carcinogens during active duty service. Screening before symptoms become evident is the only proven method to detect lung cancer at its earliest and most treatable stage.

LCA appreciates the efforts to set up registries to see if a causal relationship exists between burn pits exposures and current or future health problems so that those exposed could voluntarily be evaluated and be tracked for health problems now or down the road. Again, we thank you for your efforts to advance Burn Pits Accountability Act this Congress. We applaud your advocacy for our shared community of veterans and service men and women. With great excitement, we welcome the opportunity to work with your office and other Congressional Members to address lung cancer among our veterans.

Please contact Elridge Proctor, Director of Government Affairs & Public Policy at 202-742-1427 or email [Eproctor@lungcanceralliance.org](mailto:Eproctor@lungcanceralliance.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Laurie Fenton Ambrose". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie Fenton Ambrose  
President & CEO  
Lung Cancer Alliance

