

# 2020: What a year

PanCAN's vision is to create a world in which all patients with pancreatic cancer will thrive.

Our mission is to take bold action to improve the lives of everyone impacted by pancreatic cancer by advancing scientific research, building community, sharing knowledge and advocating for patients.

**On our cover:** Sharaye Samuels and Mark Gardner at PurpleStride San Diego 2019.

Mark lost his wife to the disease, and Sharaye was her lifelong friend. Mark told us, "With information from PanCAN, our mood flipped from despair to hope."

[Read their story.](#)

PANCREATIC  
CANCER  
ACTION  
NETWORK<sup>®</sup>

# 2020: What a year

## **What a remarkable year it's been.**

A year of significant progress. A year that tested the strength of our organization. But most of all, it was a year that reinforced just how much you won't let anything – even a global pandemic – get in the way of improving pancreatic cancer patients' lives.

An organization is only as strong as its people. For more than 20 years you have shown support in powerful ways.

You attended PurpleStride events and raised millions of dollars. You funded research that has changed the pancreatic cancer landscape. You advocated for more federal funding for pancreatic cancer research. All because you're committed to taking bold action to improve the lives of everyone affected by this disease.

This year, unlike any we've experienced before, you continued to step up when it was needed most.

Because of you, pancreatic cancer patients, their loved ones and their caregivers still have a place to go for one-on-one, personalized support. They know PanCAN will be there for them anytime they need us – even while navigating pancreatic cancer during a pandemic.

When PurpleStride transitioned to virtual events starting in March, you still showed up in your neighborhoods, parks and on bike paths and participated in your own creative way. Through your fundraising, you kept pushing for progress for patients.

Our PanCAN family knows how to deal with a difficult and challenging problem – we've been fighting back against pancreatic cancer for more than two decades. A pandemic won't slow us down – it only makes us even more determined to change the course of this disease.

Through your bold actions, you're helping pancreatic cancer patients thrive. And we are so grateful.

  
**Julie Fleshman, JD, MBA**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## MAJOR MILESTONES

# In 2020: You rose to the occasion, again and again

### Because of you, we reached significant milestones in the fight against pancreatic cancer.

- **The five-year survival rate hit double digits** – 10%.  
When funding for pancreatic cancer increases, so does the survival rate. **You made that difference.**
- You funded PanCAN's innovative precision medicine service, Know Your Tumor,<sup>®</sup> and now we know that pancreatic cancer patients who go on matched therapies **can live up to one year longer.**
- You funded a research grant that led to a test to predict which patients are most **likely to respond** to FOLFIRINOX chemotherapy.
- Because of your advocacy and passion, the first-ever **maintenance therapy drug** for pancreatic cancer patients – Lynparza<sup>®</sup> – was approved by the FDA.

### New therapy meant this mother could really live life

“Genetic testing showed I have the BRCA-2 mutation. If I were healthy, this would have been upsetting. But with pancreatic cancer, it was the key to life-saving treatment. **My quality of life dramatically improved once I began taking Lynparza.**

I responded so well that I was eligible for surgery. Lynparza helped me fight cancer and continue to really live life. I would not be here today without it. My children now talk about how Mommy crushed cancer.”

*Allison Perlis* Survivor

Allison explains how research saved her life. [Watch the video.](#)



Allison Perlis spending treasured time with her three kids.

## PATIENT SERVICES

# In 2020: You gave patients and families support any time they needed it

## It was a year of unwavering access to options, information and hope.

The pandemic took us all by surprise. But thanks to your resolute generosity, we continued to help patients and families, offering uninterrupted service and support (even as we relocated to home offices).

Three years ago, when Debbie Liang's husband was diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer, Debbie contacted PanCAN's Patient Services, and then again this spring after the tumor on his pancreas returned. The difference was, this time he needed treatment during a global pandemic. Patient Services was there both times—and many times in between—providing helpful, trusted information, a shoulder to lean on and guidance with next steps.

**“From the start, PanCAN was so helpful. Their information is a godsend. Any time we talk to someone who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, we tell them to contact PanCAN. They have outstanding resources to help you.”**

*Debbie Liang* Caregiver



Patient Services was there for the Liang family every step of the way.

During the pandemic, we heard from patients how much they needed us, now more than ever. You allowed us to spring into action, raising awareness that PanCAN was and will continue to be here for them.

- We hosted a special webinar series, “Navigating Pancreatic Cancer Care During the Coronavirus Crisis,” for patients and families.

***“Your special webinar series was very informative and I appreciated the focus on vulnerability, precautions and treatment that were cause for concern in my family.”***

- We transitioned more than 20 members of our Patient Services team to work remotely and stay connected to patients and families.
- We deployed an encrypted, secure server to ensure that confidential patient information would remain just as protected as it is when the patient's call is taken in the office.
- We created resources for patients and families including information about the coronavirus: symptoms; precautions/tips for prevention; questions to ask your healthcare team; local resources (including food pantries and state health department information; pharmaceutical company resources, etc.); general information on how the coronavirus might impact pancreatic cancer treatment; and how to find helpful resources locally.

PATIENT SERVICES

# In 2020: You gave a new mindset to those facing pancreatic cancer

You gave nearly 42,000 patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals free access to Patient Services for disease information, treatment options and hope.



Nikki Williams leads Team Tony at PurpleStride Pittsburgh to raise funds in honor of her dad.

“PanCAN’s Patient Services gave us a whole new mindset. The survivor stories gave me my breath back, and I passed that brightness on to my dad. PanCAN also gave me the confidence to take charge of my dad’s care. Thank you to an angel on earth – PanCAN. Every day I am more and more grateful. **My dad is living today, and I believe it’s because of you.**”

*Nikki Williams* Caregiver



Survivor Gina Harrison feels fortunate to have found PanCAN.

## PATIENT SERVICES

### You helped Gina find a clinical trial

For Gina Harrison, it began with excruciating abdominal and back pain. “It was a pain I’d never felt before. Worse than childbirth.”

When she was finally diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, she called PanCAN’s Patient Services and gathered all the information she could find about the disease.

She also enrolled in PanCAN’s Know Your Tumor precision medicine service. Her report showed that her tumor had a BRCA-1 mutation. It also included a personalized list of relevant clinical trials, including one for patients with that mutation.

When her cancer spread, her oncologist recommended trying a different chemotherapy, but Gina had her eye on the clinical trial that was identified on her Know Your Tumor report.

With her oncologist’s backing, she enrolled in the investigational treatment, which combined targeted therapy and immunotherapy.

Today Gina is realistic but positive.

“I was dealt a bad hand, but I’m not going to give up. I’m going to look for answers and remedies and hope for the best.”

She also believes in the power of connecting with other survivors and appreciates the friendships she’s made with people who truly know what she’s going through.

**“Meeting people who are in the same boat as you is very therapeutic. It’s vital to reach out to an organization like PanCAN that can connect you with others for support.”**

“I feel fortunate to have known about PanCAN. I have never seen an organization quite like this. They support every aspect of what you’re going through.”

PURPLESTRIDE

# In 2020: You strengthened the purple community



PurpleStride Austin was the first PurpleStride of the "Virtual Is the New Purple" season. PurpleStride Las Vegas in April was an early event to go virtual and surpassed its fundraising goal during a global pandemic.

More than **61,000** of you were part of our PurpleStride community nationwide, and in the process raised **\$11.8M**.

Your enthusiasm, energy and willingness to try something new in March when we began to transition 27 in-person PurpleStride events to virtual events (Virtual Is the New Purple!) showed your deep commitment to our mission, to raising funds and building awareness for pancreatic cancer.

“Seeing other survivors at PurpleStride was one of the most empowering moments of my life, and my mom’s. The connections we made were really encouraging.

PurpleStride started out as a day of hope for us and turned into something far more. My mom was filled with so much joy.”

**Ivy Watts**

*PurpleStride Boston Team Captain and Caregiver*

Watch a video about [Virtual PurpleStride](#).



Ivy Watts and family at PurpleStride Boston 2019.



Ivy Watts and her mom, Sang.

PURPLESTRIDE

# In 2020: Your involvement meant more people could do what they love

“The doctor said it was pancreatic cancer. It was like a punch in the gut. Like the air explodes out of your lungs. Like your diaphragm goes into a spasm. You can't catch your breath. You're stunned. You're stupefied.

He also said, 'A cancer diagnosis can take over your life. Don't let it. Don't forget to live. Do what you love.' And that's what I've done. PanCAN and PurpleStride are among the things I love.

**I knew I had to get involved. To do something. To give money. To raise money. To help find a cure. To help others who are getting that punch in the gut. For others who are stunned. Stupefied. Can't see straight.**

That's why we do PurpleStride. We want to help them catch their breath. To pay for research. To provide services. Help them see clearly. We can give them hope so that they don't forget to live. So that they remember to do what they love. Because none of us have more than this moment.”

**Joe Krebs**

*Survivor and PurpleStride Washington, D.C., Team Captain*



Survivor Joe Krebs and family at PurpleStride Washington, D.C., (left) and on a recent vacation.



Watch Joe's moving [PurpleStride speech](#).

## FUNDRAISING

# In 2020: Your creativity inspired others to fund the mission

You raised nearly \$4.23M through do-it-yourself fundraising. There were 481 events just last year through our Wage Hope My Way program, from pickleball tournaments to virtual car shows.



### A big birthday goal

For his 70th birthday, Randy Stinson wanted to honor his wife, Sharon, a pancreatic cancer survivor, by raising money for PanCAN.

Calling it the “700 x 70,” he pledged to bike 700 miles and raise \$700 for the cause. As his fundraising grew more successful, he kept raising his goal and finally settled at \$7,770.

By his birthday a month later, he had biked 834 miles and raised \$10,880!

Randy’s feat was highlighted on PanCAN’s Facebook and Instagram, and at last count, had drawn 8,000 likes, 428 comments and many, many thoughtful birthday wishes from you. Randy also heard from a dozen people who had loved ones who had not survived pancreatic cancer.

“Each time I heard a story, I felt their emotion and remembered what my thoughts were when Sharon was diagnosed,” he said.

**“Hope is what is needed.”**



### Month of good memories

When the pandemic prohibited Kim Hagar from holding a memorial in her husband David’s memory or running in PanCAN’s PurpleStride Denver to raise money, she found a creative way to honor him.

She devoted the month of June to activities that reminded her of David and donated \$1 to PanCAN for every minute she spent doing them. She invited friends and family to join her. Socially distanced glasses of wine with friends on the porch, mountain drives on David’s favorite routes, Zoom calls with friends, family and colleagues.

Kim matched their donations, dollar for dollar. The good memories from “A Month of David” replaced some of the tougher ones from the previous year and her gift is giving hope to pancreatic cancer patients and their families.

*Editor’s note: We extend heartfelt condolences to Randy and the Stinson family on the recent passing of Sharon.*

**VOLUNTEERS**

# In 2020: You were unstoppable

More than 700 volunteers across the country devoted 138,000 hours to the cause.

You



Advocated



Hosted events and meetings



Reached out to connect with caregivers and survivors



Then did it all virtually!



“As a PanCAN volunteer, PurpleStride participant AND survivor, I get to serve as an example that pancreatic cancer isn't a death sentence and encourage patients and loved ones to never give up.

There's strength in numbers, and together, we will increase awareness. One day soon, purple and PanCAN will be as familiar as the color pink.”

*G. Paris Johnson* Survivor and Volunteer



COMMUNITY

# In 2020: You were there in every way for your PanCAN family



PanCAN's Kansas City Affiliate volunteer and mask maker Charlotte Garrett.

Even with a full-time job and a busy schedule as a volunteer with PanCAN's Kansas City Affiliate, Charlotte Garrett wanted to take on more when the coronavirus arrived – so she began sewing masks for frontline responders. She put unused PurpleStride T-shirts to use as masks and today is part of a team that's sewn and distributed more than 11,000 masks.



Dr. Anirban Maitra, whose talents and kindness are limitless.

Dr. Anirban Maitra is a giver by nature. His commitment to ending pancreatic cancer takes many forms. In the midst of the coronavirus, Dr. Maitra made a significant gift to PanCAN: the honorarium he receives as a member of PanCAN's Precision Promise<sup>SM</sup> Steering Committee.

He knows cancer research, advocacy and PanCAN's Patient Services can't wait, especially now.

“Even with their large hearts, Americans are distracted by personal travails and the anxieties of a global pandemic.

When you are part of a family, you do whatever you can to chip in. And I have always considered PanCAN family.”

**Anirban Maitra, MBBS**

*Scientific Director of the Sheikh Ahmed Bin Zayed Center for Pancreatic Cancer Research, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center Current Member and Past Chair, PanCAN Scientific and Medical Advisory Board*



## RESEARCH

# In 2020: You made research our biggest priority

## Answers are out there. You're getting us closer to them.

- You **funded \$21M** in pancreatic cancer research – including our grants program and scientific and clinical initiatives.
- You made it possible to launch **large-scale, groundbreaking research initiatives** that will be the catalyst for transforming the way pancreatic cancer is detected and treated.
- Since 2003, **you've funded a total of \$126M** in pancreatic cancer research.

## Labs shut down, but progress didn't.

- You allowed our research grants program to be **flexible and nimble** when the pandemic hit.
- Grantees were given extra time to complete their projects and report results to us.
- Research never stopped – virtual conferences and computational biology approaches allowed our grantees to remain connected and productive.

“Answering the questions we have about pancreatic cancer wouldn't be possible without you. PanCAN funding is helping us hit the ground running. Now we can start digging into what pancreatic cancer cells consume and how the nutrients are digested. Then we can learn how to disrupt their food supply and their ability to grow.”

**Alex Muir, PhD**

*PanCAN Grantee, Assistant Professor, Ben May Department for Cancer Research, University of Chicago*

“Funding is like oxygen to a scientist. The grant I received made it possible to scale my lab and approach challenging, fundamental questions about the disease.”

**Kenneth Olive, PhD**

*PanCAN Grantee, Associate Professor of Medicine, Columbia University*

“Learning we were selected for a PanCAN grant was one of the scientific highlights of this otherwise difficult year for research. It came at a crucial moment – the university imposed a hiring freeze on labs, with the exception of personnel covered by grants. Our PanCAN grant allowed us to hire a postdoctoral fellow that otherwise we could not have hired – and our project would have been in severe peril.”

**Daria Esterházy, PhD**

*PanCAN Grantee, Assistant Professor of Pathology, University of Chicago*

## RESEARCH

# In 2020: You fueled research that's changing the future

You funded groundbreaking research from extraordinary scientists. Grantees are selected through a competitive peer-review process.

## Survivor's perseverance, fighting spirit keep this researcher going

When Christine Chio, PhD, of Columbia University Medical Center in New York City received a PanCAN Catalyst Grant funded by the Ruth and Frank Pratte Foundation in honor of the Prattes' daughter Karen Kiernan, she expressed her gratitude to Karen and her family in the letter shared here. Karen is a pancreatic cancer survivor and donor.

"I started my laboratory at Columbia University two years ago as an assistant professor with an interest in understanding the role of antioxidants in pancreatic cancer formation. Although antioxidants have always been thought to be cancer-preventing, conflicting results from clinical studies suggest that the role of antioxidants in cancer may not be so straightforward. Therefore, we asked if antioxidants may actually promote cancer formation in certain contexts, and if so, how.

We proposed this idea to PanCAN two years ago and were very fortunate to have received their support to pursue this high-risk project.

The PanCAN Catalyst Grant is very meaningful to my lab not only because it was the very first grant that my lab received, but also because it made possible our discovery – that antioxidants can promote pancreatic cancer formation through controlling the type of proteins that pancreatic cancer cells make to support their growth and survival.

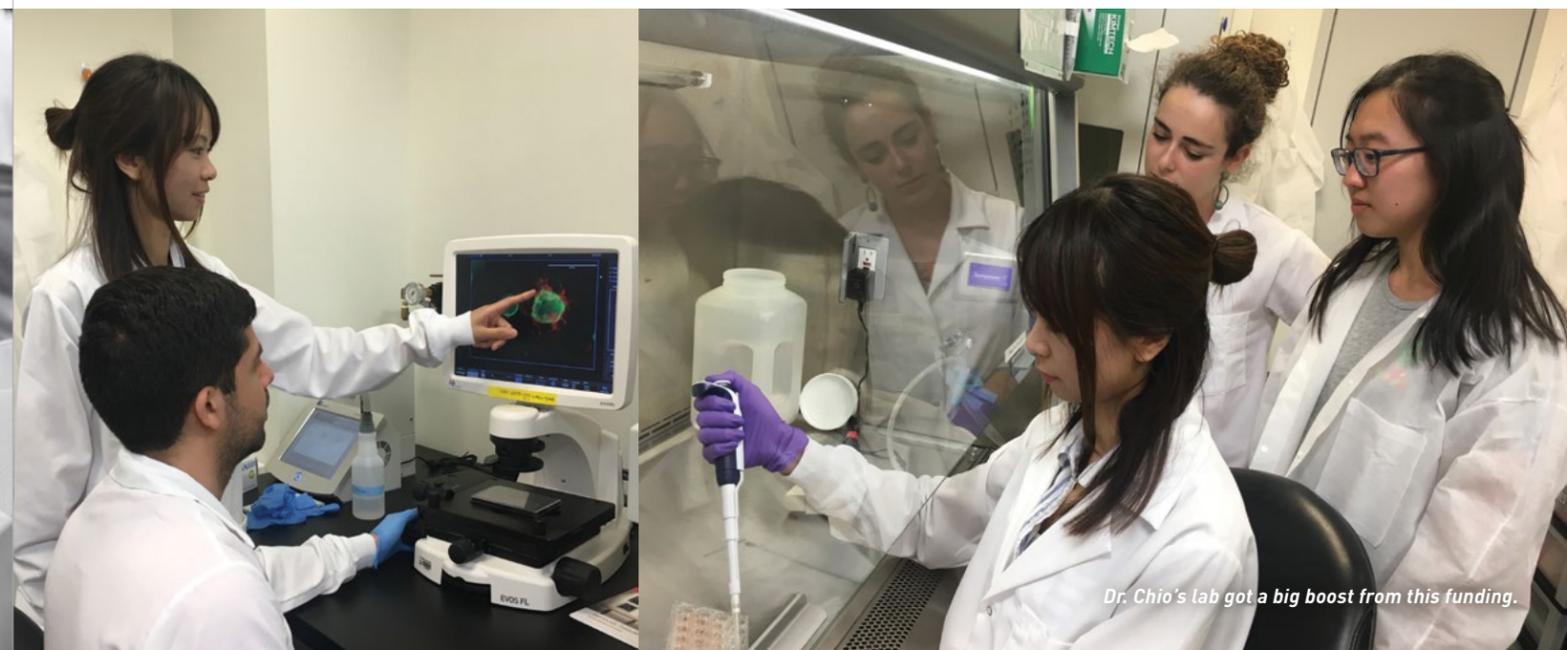
This observation led us to identify a therapeutic target, inhibition of which prolongs the survival of mice with pancreatic cancer. We published this work in the journal *Nature Communications* last year and we are now working with our clinical collaborators at Columbia to bring these findings from bench to bedside.

**Our work would not have been possible without generous supporters like you.**

Karen, your perseverance and fighting spirit is what keeps me, and my team of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows awake at night, thinking about ways to one day turn your victory story into that of many more. I look forward to meeting you in person soon."



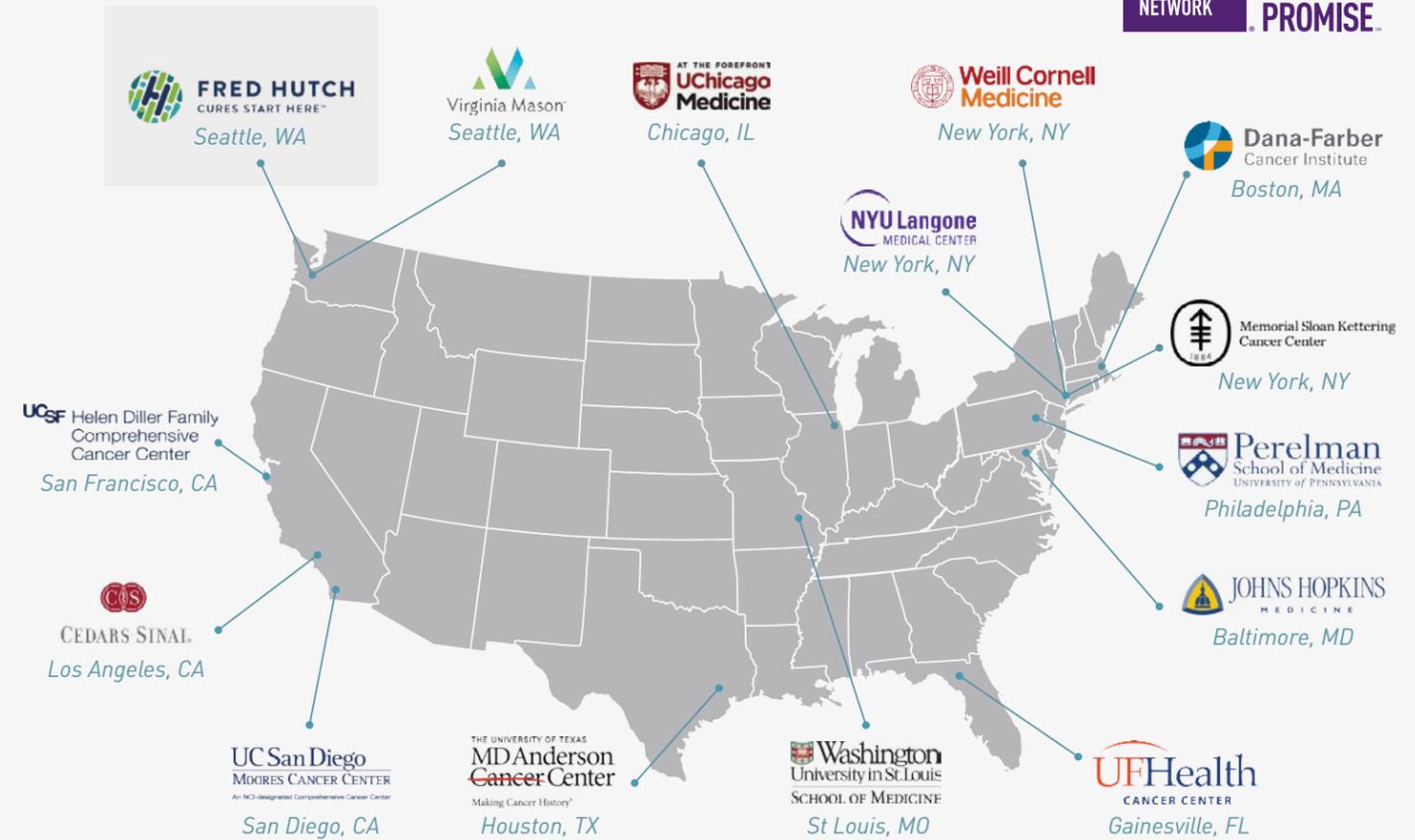
Karen Kiernan and family fueled Dr. Chio's innovative ideas.



Dr. Chio's lab got a big boost from this funding.

**RESEARCH**

**In 2020:  
You brought a  
groundbreaking,  
game-changing  
clinical trial to life**



Because of your visionary belief in what is possible, **Precision Promise, our groundbreaking clinical trial** designed to bring new treatment options to patients more quickly, opened for patient enrollment after four years in the making.

- Eight sites were open by the end of June and we're well on our way to getting Precision Promise up and running at all 15 sites in 2020.
- One investigational arm is part of Precision Promise.
- The first patient was enrolled at NYU in April – during the pandemic.
- We're already compiling the most comprehensive database of pancreatic cancer patient information available anywhere, which we will share so that the entire pancreatic cancer research community can learn from the findings.

**You made Precision Promise possible through your generous gifts.**

ADVOCACY

# In 2020: Patients are living longer because of your advocacy

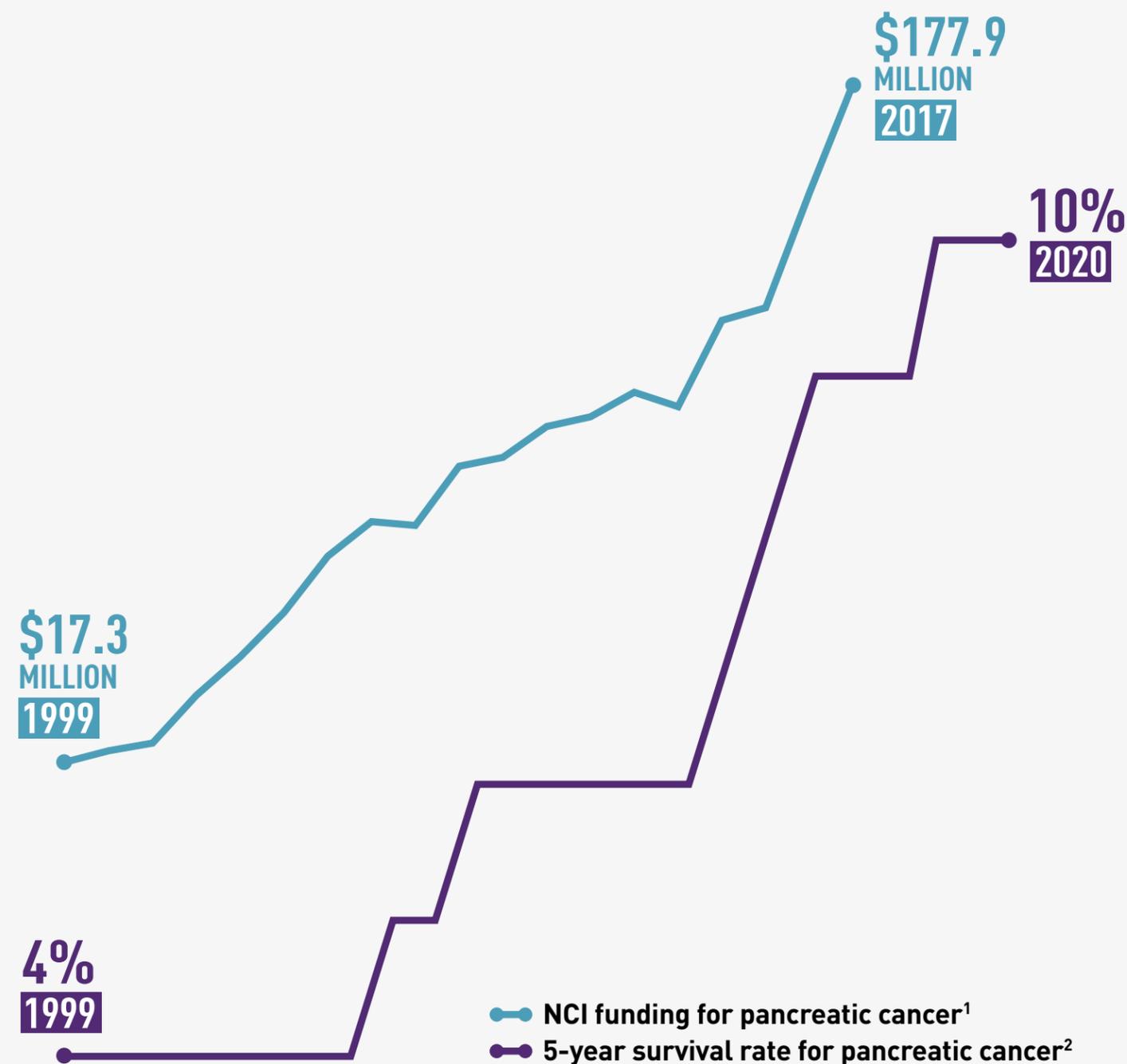
We don't receive government funding, but we do make sure Congress hears from all of us about the importance of funding research through the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute. When federal funding for the disease increases, so does survival.

In a big win this year for the pancreatic cancer community, Congress created a dedicated \$6M federal pancreatic cancer research program at the Department of Defense (DoD).

This is the first time pancreatic cancer has had a dedicated funding program at the DoD specifically for innovative, high-impact research to accelerate discoveries of new treatments and early detection strategies.

**You made this happen.**

## More NIH and NCI funding correlates with increased survival



1. NCI-Funded Research Portfolio; <http://fundedresearch.cancer.gov/nciportfolio/> (accessed: May 2019).  
2. American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2020. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2020.

In a typical year, 600 advocates register to show up for PanCAN's Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C. This year...

**600+**

advocates attended PanCAN's first-ever Advocacy Week Virtual Kick-Off Event.

**1,995**

advocates called members of Congress to urge them to increase federal funding for pancreatic cancer research.

**18,161**

emails were sent to members of Congress from PanCAN advocates.

**115**

virtual meetings took place with members of Congress or their staff.

**999**

tweets and retweets of PanCAN Advocacy Week were posted.

**EVERY MEMBER**

of Congress was reached with your message!

ADVOCACY

## In 2020: Your voices were heard loud and clear

“Hi, my name is Logan Wood and I live in Massachusetts. I lost my grandpa to pancreatic cancer. Although he died before I was born, I know he was a great person and I know he would want me to do anything to help other families. I really need your support and for you to increase funding for pancreatic cancer research. Thank you.”

*Logan Wood, age 13*

*In advocacy calls to members of Congress*

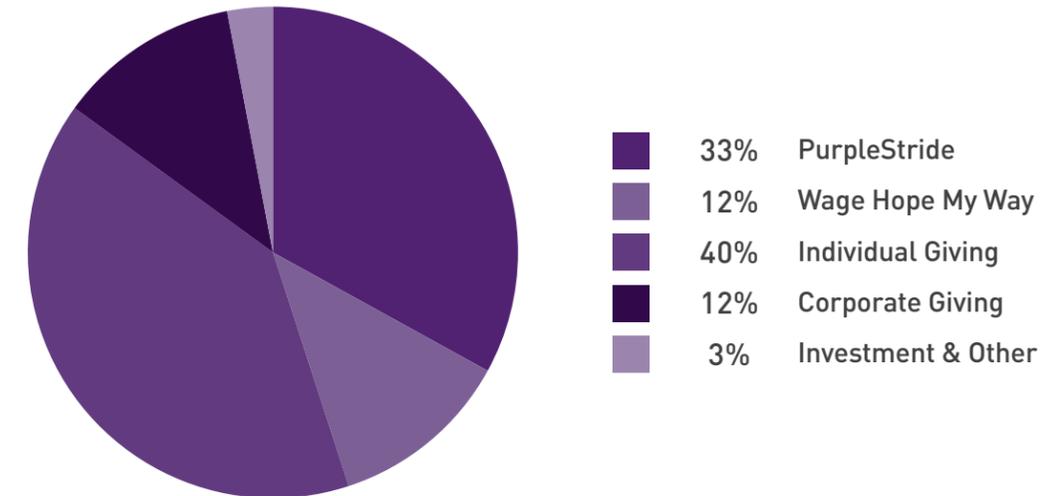
# Your gifts at work in the year that was!

**PanCAN is dedicated to using your gifts wisely and maintaining full transparency.**

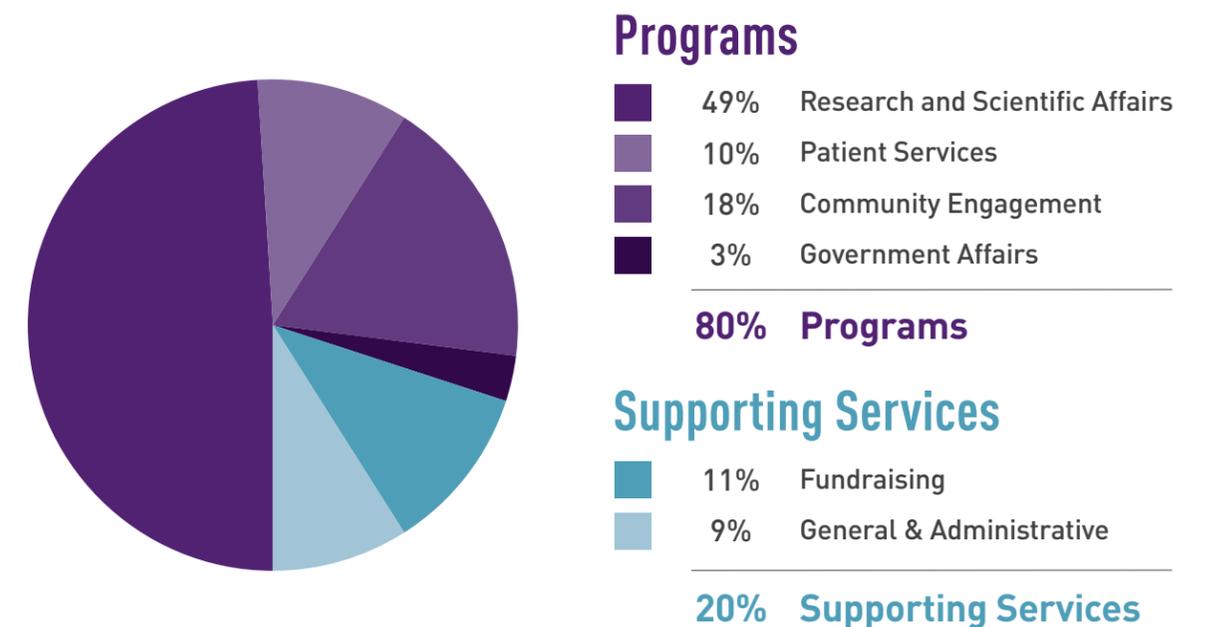
For the 16th consecutive year, we received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator – you put your trust in us and we take that very seriously. Only 21 of the more than 9,000 organizations rated have received this rating with the same consistency.

See how your dollars were put to work in fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).

## Your Contributions

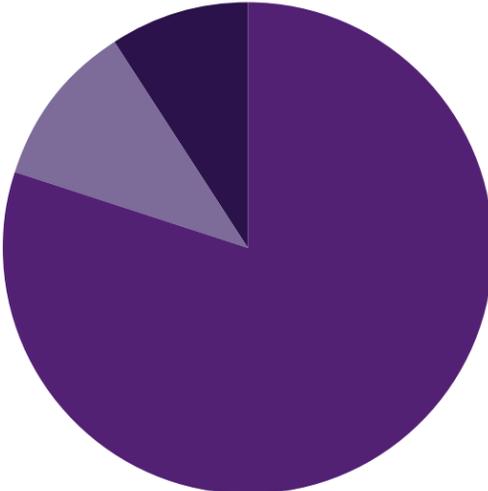


## How Your Dollars Are Spent



# Your contributions & how your dollars are spent

## Addendum



**Total Income** \$36,374,163

**Total Expenses** \$42,158,811

- Program \$33,790,769
- Fundraising \$4,775,830
- Administrative \$3,592,212

**Ending Net Assets** \$43,252,630

# How to take even more bold action on behalf of patients



**Give personally**



**Refer people to PanCAN's free Patient Services at 877-2-PANCAN**



**Participate in PurpleStride**



**Volunteer with your local affiliate**



**Become an advocate**



**Ask your company to donate or sponsor a PanCAN event**



**Host your own fundraiser**

“No one should fight pancreatic cancer alone. We are very appreciative of your support and generosity. You are playing a key role in advancing earlier detection and in someday finding a cure.”

*Anne Shimabukuro and Nick Pifani*  
PanCAN Survivor Council Co-Chairs



“Whether you're dedicating your time, your money or your voice, you are an essential part of our community of helpers. We are incredibly grateful.”

*Michele Wood and Matt Wilson*  
PanCAN Volunteer Advisory Council Co-Chairs

# Leadership

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# You are the heart of PanCAN

We can't support the pancreatic cancer community without you. Let's keep taking bold action, together.

“The sense of community that I've gotten through PanCAN is huge to me. Their support got me through my mom's illness, and I know I'll support PanCAN for the rest of my life.”

**Anna Shen** *PurpleStride Silicon Valley Participant, Sponsor and Volunteer*

“I remember when the survival rate for pancreatic cancer was 2%. When I was diagnosed in 2012, it was 6%. And now it's 10%. These are small increments, but they represent hundreds more people each year who are surviving pancreatic cancer. We are making progress!”

**Steven Merlin** *Survivor, Volunteer*



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



Our 16th Consecutive Year