

# ABOUT ECAN

Esophageal Cancer Action Network

**ECAN's MISSION is to SAVE LIVES** by increasing awareness about the link between Reflux Disease and Cancer, promoting early detection, supporting medical innovation to prevent, detect, treat and cure Esophageal Cancer, and providing patients and families with the latest, most reliable medical information and compassionate support.

*ECAN's Board of Directors is comprised of top medical professionals, business leaders, patients and family members who have been touched by Esophageal Cancer. A national non-profit organization based in Baltimore, Maryland, ECAN provides patients and families with support during their journey, tools to raise awareness and a chance to advocate for progress to increase survival and quality of life for patients - and slow the increase of this disease in the future.*

## **Among ECAN's accomplishments:**

**Critical Research:** In 2019, ECAN successfully led the charge to add Esophageal Cancer to a multi-million-dollar cancer research fund controlled by Congress for the first time in history – and repeated that feat again in 2020. The result has been 2021 awards of nearly \$4.5 million more in funding for researchers seeking to study the prevention, detection, treatment and cure of Esophageal Cancer. This represents a 15% increase in federal funding for Esophageal Cancer research in just one year. Today, ECAN is fighting to keep Esophageal Cancer in the program in FY 2022. Find out more at [ecan.org/advocate](https://ecan.org/advocate).

**The Cancer Genome Atlas:** In 2011, ECAN successfully advocated with the National Cancer Institute to change course and include Esophageal Cancer in its genome-mapping project known as The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA). The journal *Nature* published the groundbreaking results of TCGA's Esophageal Cancer project in 2017. Those findings resulted in the inclusion of Esophageal Cancer in studies focused on gastric cancer that might never have considered Esophageal Cancer patients if not for the TCGA findings. Some of those studies have led to 4 approvals in 2021 of new immunotherapy indications for Esophageal Cancer patients.

**Education for Patients and Families:** ECAN hosts online webinars on a regular basis providing members of the public with access to critical information from the researchers who have brought the latest and most significant advances in preventing, detecting, and treating Esophageal Cancer. In September 2021, ECAN hosted its first conference entitled ***GERD, Barrett's Esophagus, and Esophageal Cancer: A Path to Save Lives***. The three-day virtual conference brought together the nation's top experts to share important insights, conversation, and information with patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and industry leaders.

**Labels to Save Lives:** In May 2017, ECAN filed a Citizen Petition with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requesting that **labels on all heartburn remedies sold over-the-counter** include a warning that persistent heartburn can be a sign that patients are at risk for developing Esophageal Cancer and that the medication will not eliminate that risk. ECAN-commissioned market research found that **only 14% of American adults are aware that acid reflux can cause cancer**, even though the type of Esophageal Cancer caused by reflux is the fastest increasing cancer among American men.

New cancer warning labels could save many lives by paving the way for early detection and prevention of Esophageal Cancer. Though the FDA recently denied the original petition filed by ECAN, it gave strong guidance as to the evidence that would be required to change that decision. ECAN is working to build that case and plans to refile its petition.

**Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month:** In 2009, ECAN launched the effort to have April designated as Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month throughout the United States. With ECAN's support, citizens across the country successfully petitioned for hundreds of gubernatorial proclamations declaring April EC Awareness Month. ***April is now observed as Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month by companies, organizations and governments across the nation - and the world. Find out more at [ecan.org/EC-Awareness-Month](http://ecan.org/EC-Awareness-Month)***

**A Guide for Patients:** With input from physicians around the country, ECAN developed an innovative ***Guide for Patients*** providing comprehensive and clear information about the link between Heartburn and Cancer. Designed to help patients advocate for their own health care, the Guide is distributed at public events, in medical offices, and is also available as a **on the ECAN website in both English and Spanish. You can find the free download at [stopec.org](http://stopec.org).**

**Legendary Partnership:** ECAN has partnered with the estate of film icon **Humphrey Bogart** whose life was cut short in 1957 by Esophageal Cancer. In May 2013, the 3,000 guests of the First Annual Humphrey Bogart Film Festival in Key Largo, Florida witnessed the launch of *Screenings for Screenings*. These movie trailers produced by ECAN and presented at the festival, feature Bogart's son Stephen encouraging those at risk for Esophageal Cancer to "get checked." The trailers can now be seen each year before each film at the Humphrey Bogart Film Festival.

**Events that make a Difference:** ECAN sponsors and supports multiple fundraising and awareness raising events around the country including walks, runs, bike rides, golf tournaments, dinners, library outreach, speaking events, art shows and more. ECAN and its volunteers have hosted more than 100 events to raise awareness across the U.S. and in other countries since 2010. ECAN continues to host ***Steps to Save Lives*** 5Ks across the nation and virtually in the time of the pandemic.

**Major Leagues & Major Cities:** In April 2014, ECAN presented the first Esophageal Cancer Awareness event in professional sports when the **NBA's Los Angeles Clippers** took on the Dallas

Mavericks at the Staples Center. Later that month, ECAN sponsored the **first Esophageal Cancer Awareness race ever held in New York City**; more than 1,000 attended the two-day festival that included a 5K, 10K and Half Marathon.

**Cancer Dancer Gala ~ Taking Steps to Save Lives:** In April 2012, ECAN hosted the first Gala ever held in the U.S. to focus on Esophageal Cancer advocacy. The Late **Former California Congresswoman and Under Secretary of State Ellen O. Tauscher** moved the crowd of 300 with her story of survival of stage III Esophageal Cancer. In 2013, the Cancer Dancer Gala attracted a larger audience and raised more than \$110,000 to support ECAN's mission. In 2014, the Cancer Dancer Gala went Hollywood with more than 300 guests and remarks by **ECAN spokesman Stephen Bogart**.

**Seriously Funny:** In 2015, ECAN launched its ***No Laughing Matter*** campaign – a public awareness effort that uses humor to help folks understand that reflux disease is a serious condition. The highlight of the campaign was An Evening with **Jeff Foxworthy** in Arlington, Virginia that brought a new audience to our message and entertained our supporters with a hilarious evening. Leading up to the event, ECAN hosted competitions in comedy clubs throughout the US for the chance to be the opening act for Jeff Foxworthy. Foxworthy also stars in a public service announcement that warns patients that if they have heartburn but don't tell their doctor, in addition to being a red-neck, they might be risking their lives.

**Reaching for the Stars:** ECAN took awareness to new heights in 2015 with its ***Stories to Save Lives*** event in **Los Angeles**. More than 40 brave participants rappelled down 24 stories of the **Hilton Universal City Hotel** on behalf of someone who has faced Esophageal Cancer. Two rappellers were EC survivors and a third was a patient who was battling Esophageal Cancer. This fun and moving day delivered a strong message about the importance of early detection and taking reflux disease seriously.

**HISTORY:** Former attorney and broadcast journalist Mindy Mintz Mordecai joined with an impressive group of dedicated professionals to start ECAN in 2009. Mordecai lost her husband and the father of their two young children to Esophageal Cancer in 2008. She has served as ECAN's President and CEO since its inception.