



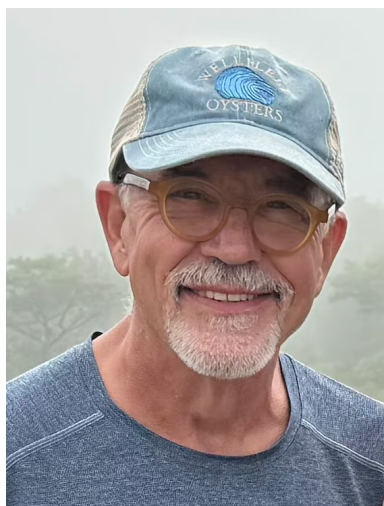
The Beacon

E-NEWSLETTER OF THE BLADDER CANCER ADVOCACY NETWORK • BCAN.ORG

April 1, 2025

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A Surgical Oncologist Gets a Bladder Cancer Diagnosis



After more than three decades as a surgical oncologist, [Dr. Richard Zera](#) suddenly found himself on the other side of the exam table—with a diagnosis of an aggressive and rare form of bladder cancer. His deeply personal journey from physician to patient reveals the fear, frustration, and vulnerability that even the most experienced medical professionals face when confronted with serious illness.

In this [compelling first-person story](#), Dr. Zera opens up about the emotional rollercoaster of navigating a complex healthcare system, the impact of delayed care, and the profound lessons he learned about empathy and resilience. His candid reflections shine a light on the patient experience in ways only someone who's lived both roles can. Click to read his remarkable story—and find out how he's using his voice to support and guide others facing bladder cancer.

[Read Richard's Story](#)

Nominate Your Beacon of Hope!

We're excited to announce that nominations are now open for the [2025 Beacon of Hope Award](#)!

We invite you to share the story of someone who has made a meaningful



**Who is your
BEACON OF HOPE?**

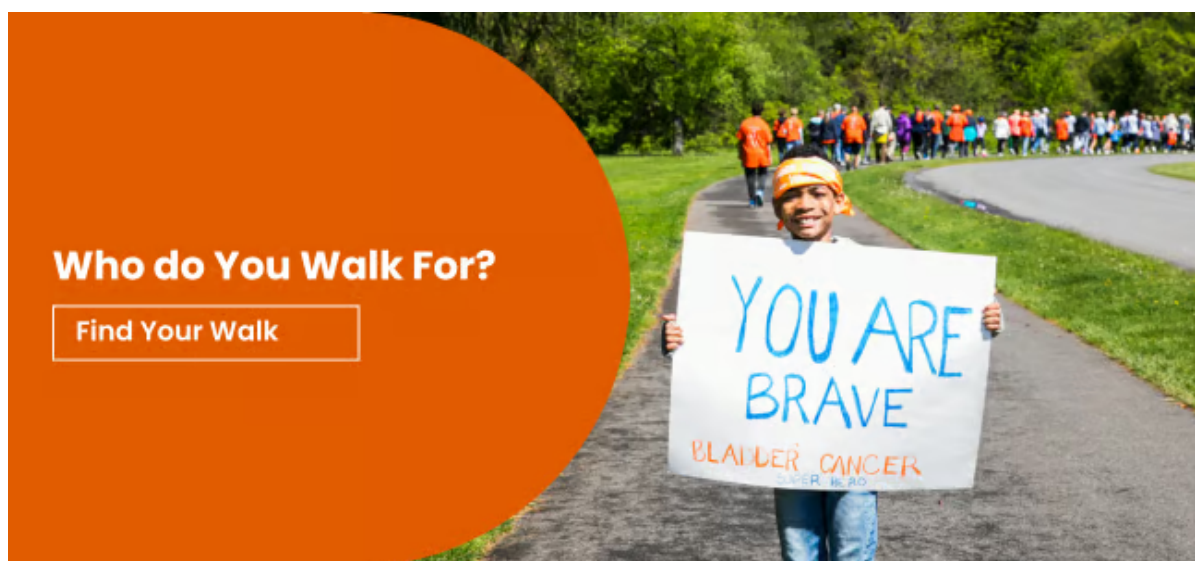
difference in your bladder cancer journey. **Nominations begin April 1 and close on April 18.**

This special award honors someone who has been **a light in the darkness that bladder cancer can bring**—a person who offers unwavering support, strength, and inspiration. Whether it's a caregiver, healthcare professional, advocate, or loved one, this is your chance to recognize their impact.

In May 2025, the bladder cancer community will vote for one of three finalists. Help us celebrate the incredible individuals who bring hope and light to our community.

Submit your nomination today!

Be Part of the Fun: Register for a BCAN Walk Now!



As BCAN marks 20 years of making a difference, we invite you to be part of an event that brings our community together in support, remembrance, and action. The [2025 Walks to End Bladder Cancer](#) offer a chance to celebrate this milestone, create lasting change, and recognize two decades of hope and progress. Walks will be taking place in 19 cities as well as virtually.

This year's walk is more than just a fundraiser—it's **a powerful symbol of solidarity and strength**. By participating, you'll honor the experiences of patients, families, and caregivers while contributing to the future of bladder cancer awareness and research. Register now and join us for this meaningful, milestone event!

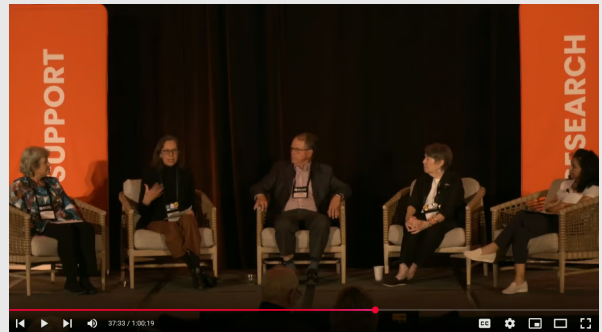
Find a Walk near you!

- [Albany](#) (May 3rd)
- [Austin](#) (May 17th)
- [Baltimore](#) (May 17th)
- [Boston](#) (May 17th)
- [Chicago](#) (May 17th)
- [Cleveland](#) (May 3rd)
- [Columbus](#) (May 10th)
- [Denver](#) (May 10th)
- [Myrtle Beach](#) (May 3rd)
- [Nashville](#) (May 10th)
- [New York City](#) (May 10th)
- [Philadelphia](#) (April 26th)
- [Pittsburgh](#) (May 31st)
- [Portland, ME](#) (May 3rd)
- [Richmond](#) (May 17th)
- [St. Louis](#) (May 3rd)
- [San Diego](#) (May 3rd)
- [Seattle](#) (May 17th)
- [Washington, DC](#) (May 3rd)

[Do a Virtual Walk That Fits Your Schedule](#)

Did You Miss Our Spring Summit for Patients and Families? Catch Up Here!

In case you couldn't attend our [Spring Summit for Patients and Families](#) in San Diego on March 7th and 8th, we have you covered! We recorded **all the sessions** and they are available now on the BCAN web site.



The 2025 Spring Summit offered two days of expert insights, practical tools, and inspiring stories to support, educate, and empower those impacted by bladder cancer. We also invite you to [peruse our agenda](#) to learn more.

[View the Summit videos](#)

Ask the Bladder Cancer Experts on May 28th



Join us for a **free**, empowering session of knowledge and insight at BCAN's upcoming "[Ask the Experts](#)" webinar on May 28, 2025 at 7:00 PM ET. Ask the Experts provides an opportunity to get information from experts in the field from the comfort of your own home.

This unique, interactive Zoom session is an **exclusive opportunity to hear from** two of the United States' foremost bladder cancer specialists,. The first is [Laura Bukavina, MD, MPH, Cleveland Clinic](#) an assistant professor of Urologic Oncology at

Cleveland Clinic Glickman Urologic Institute and a former recipient of a BCAN Young Investigator Award. Our second expert is [Matthew Milowsky, MD, FASCO, UNC](#), the Section Chief of the Genitourinary Oncology Service and Co-Director of the Urologic Oncology Program. He is also a member of BCAN's Scientific Advisory Board.

Our experts will examine not only the current state of bladder cancer treatment and research but also reflecting on the past two decades of progress in observance of BCAN's 20th anniversary year.

The event is free to attend, but **registration is required**. Seats fill up fast so save your spot by registering below.

[Register now!](#)

Be Part of Our Celebration: Share Your Photos

In honor of BCAN's 20th anniversary in 2025, we invite you to be part of something meaningful. Help us **create a powerful photo collage** that captures who you are—whether it's a picture of yourself, loved ones, pets, or significant moments from your bladder cancer journey. [Please share your photos](#) with us to be part of our anniversary collage.



This inspiring visual tribute will celebrate the strength and resilience of our BCAN community, proudly displayed in our offices and shared digitally with all participants.

Be part of this special moment! Submit your photos during the first half of 2025 and help us showcase the heart of our community—you. We'll be sharing the collage digitally this year so you can see your picture as part of it!

[Learn more and submit your photo](#)

Bladder Cancer Risk Factors: Understanding the Causes



While the exact causes of bladder cancer are not fully understood, certain behaviors and environmental exposures are known to increase the risk. Some factors are beyond your control, while



others can be managed.

Smoking is a major risk factor, as it introduces harmful toxins into the bladder. Workplace exposure to specific chemicals can also raise the risk. Additionally, genetics, age, sex and race may influence your likelihood of developing bladder cancer. If you're experiencing symptoms, it's important to identify the cause to determine whether bladder cancer could be the underlying issue.

[Learn more about risk factors](#)

Share Your Experience, Impact the Future Take BCAN's 2025 Bladder Cancer Survey Now!



Whether you're newly diagnosed or have been living with bladder cancer for years, your perspective matters. Your responses will guide us in developing stronger programs, advocating for patients, and informing future research.

The survey is confidential, comprehensive, and can be completed at your own pace—you can pause and come back anytime.

Plus, the first 1,000 U.S. participants who elect to do so will receive **a special BCAN 20th Anniversary gift!** Your experience matters—help us improve bladder cancer care for everyone. Take the survey today!

[Take the survey](#)

FREE RESOURCES FOR OUR COMMUNITY



Downloadable Resources

These resources can help you make informed decisions about your care in conjunction with your medical team.

[Learn more »](#)

Compare Treatment Options

Begin by selecting your bladder cancer diagnosis, choose a treatment, and explore some available treatment options.

[Visit now »](#)

Watch Educational Videos

These videos provide expert explanations, patient and caregiver stories, and animations to help simplify understanding bladder cancer, its diagnosis, and treatment.

[Read more »](#)

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