

I am applying for the *Anne Marie Cerato Young Advocate Bursary* for support to attend the North America Conference on Lung Cancer (NACLC) 2025, hosted by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), in Chicago, Illinois, from December 5–7, 2025, because this work is deeply personal to me. I am a university student, but also an advocate passionately about social justice and public health, and I have seen firsthand how devastating lung cancer can be. My grandfather is currently battling small cell lung cancer (SCLC), which has turned aggressive and is fast spreading.

My grandparents raised me, and my grandfather has always been like a father to me. Now, by his side as his caregiver, my world has been turned upside down. Watching him endure the pain, suffering, and uncertainty of cancer has strengthened my determination to fight for better treatment, earlier detection, and ultimately, a cure. This experience has motivated me to take action beyond my own family. I founded a nonprofit dedicated to social justice issues and have focused on advancing access to healthcare, where I work to highlight inequities and advocate for practical change. In addition to this work, I volunteer with human rights organizations on campus and local charities focused on chronic illnesses, supporting funding for research and developments of treatments. My advocacy is rooted in the belief that dignity, compassion, and access to care should not depend on geography, financial status, or stigma.

The NACLC 2025 conference represents an unparalleled opportunity to expand this work. The chance to learn from leading clinicians, researchers, and advocates will strengthen my knowledge of cutting-edge treatments and emerging technologies, while also deepening my understanding of equity-focused strategies for early detection and care. Attending this year's meeting is a unique opportunity to gain first-hand insights into the latest clinical research, breakthrough therapies, and strategies for advancing equity and early detection. Through this, I hope to leave equipped with knowledge that can educate, make an impact in my community, and spread the knowledge that will help shape the future of lung cancer care.

I am especially eager to engage with the conference's focus on collaboration, mentorship, and innovative approaches that connect research to real-world patient impact, particularly in highlighting treatments that improve comfort, address major side effects, manage infections, and provide effective pain relief. I am also eager to participate because the conference is committed to providing valuable networking and mentorship opportunities, where I can meet with experts and receive guidance from experienced lung cancer advocates and professionals. These connections will help strengthen my efforts in spreading awareness, advancing advocacy, and learning how I can further expand and improve my caregiving abilities.

Attending NACLC 2025 will not only enrich my personal advocacy but also allow me to amplify what I learn through my nonprofit work and volunteer efforts. I plan to share conference insights with patient communities, public health networks, and advocacy groups I work with, ensuring

that the knowledge I gain contributes to broader awareness and tangible change. My goal is to connect the voices of patients and caregivers to the cutting-edge research and policies shaping the future of lung cancer care.

I hope to spread this information in ways that are truly accessible. Reflecting on my family's experience when we first learned of my grandfather's diagnosis, we were overwhelmed with confusion and had little understanding of what lung cancer really was, what it meant, the different types, the treatments, or the options available. Experiencing that uncertainty and pain has made me determined to ensure others do not have to go through the same. By learning from this conference, I hope to turn this knowledge into accessible education that helps people better understand their options and emphasizes the importance of early detection and available treatments. By attending this conference, I hope to honor my grandfather's battle while building a stronger foundation for meaningful change in the lung cancer community. This experience will allow me to grow as a person, advocate, and educate myself as a caregiver committed to ensuring that every patient has access to hope, dignity, and care.

Anne Marie Cerato's story is particularly inspiring; her unwavering commitment to raising awareness and improving care for those affected by lung cancer has left an indelible mark. Lung Cancer Canada has been a vital source of information, support, and inspiration for me. The stories and resources provided have guided me and my family through this overwhelming journey, and I am deeply grateful. I would be honoured to play a small role in this mission. Thank you for considering my application.