As of January 1, 2016, there were more than 15.5 million cancer survivors alive in the United States. The number of cancer survivors is projected to increase by 31% to 20.3 million by 2026. In 2017 alone, an expected 1,688,780 people will be diagnosed with cancer. In the U.S., the lifetime risk of developing cancer is approximately 1 in 2 in men, and 1 in 3 in women. Given the prevalence of cancer diagnoses, it is unusual to find someone who has not been touched by cancer in some way.

Our primary goals in writing this book are: (1) to generate more awareness of the legal issues that often arise as a result of a cancer diagnosis; and (2) to cultivate more advocates to assist cancer survivors and their families, friends, and caregivers in navigating those issues.

What Is Cancer Rights Law?

Cancer rights law is a colliding amalgamation of a number of separate areas of law, including employment, insurance, government benefits, consumer rights, and estate planning.

Some of the topics discussed in this book are not even thought of as legal issues by a lay audience, such as health insurance. However, the availability of health insurance coverage, consumer protections in the use of coverage, and the right to appeal denials of coverage are all routed in laws. And this lack of awareness of the law and failure to recognize its power to help people has been a barrier to people getting their needs met.

In the context of a cancer diagnosis, an understanding of your rights can mean the difference between losing your job, your health insurance, or even your home.

3. American Cancer Society, supra note 1.
4. Id.
And in its most extreme case, it can be the difference between getting access to care or losing your life.

This is the first book of its kind to address these legal topics through the lens of cancer diagnosis.