



June 5, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Cochran and Blunt and Ranking Members Leahy and Murray:

As members of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a coalition of public interest groups representing millions of cancer researchers, patients, survivors and their families, we would like to thank you for making the fight against cancer a priority in the FY17 Omnibus Appropriations Act. We would especially like to thank you for continuing your pattern of providing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) with robust funding increases, as well as protecting funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cancer prevention and control programs.

For decades, research conducted at NIH and NCI has played a key role in virtually every major cancer prevention, detection, and treatment discovery. Increasing this vital funding in FY17 and beyond is imperative in fulfilling the mission of the NIH in innovating and discovering new therapies and cures in the fight against the many diseases known as cancer.

Additionally, the CDC cancer prevention and control programs provide vital resources to every state for cancer monitoring and surveillance, screening programs, state cancer control planning and implementation, along with education and awareness initiatives. We thank you for recognizing the importance of these resources for state and local cancer prevention efforts and hope we can count on your support to protect these vital programs in the future. OVAC opposes the proposed elimination, consolidation, and funding cut for state and local awareness and education programs for prostate, skin, ovarian, and colorectal cancers.

A recent poll¹ commissioned by OVAC demonstrates that there is overwhelming bipartisan public support for federal cancer research and prevention funding:

- Federal support for medical research to cure diseases like cancer was seen as tremendously important by survey respondents (90% extremely/very important);
- When informed about the recent passage of a \$2 billion increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including \$475 million for cancer research, voters favor the increase in funding by 74% to 20%.
- When asked whether Congress should significantly increase its funding for the National Institutes of Health, an organization that supports medical research for diseases like cancer, voters favor significantly increasing the funding by 75% to 18% margin.
- There is widespread consensus that it is also highly important to support state and local cancer prevention programs. This belief transcends political allegiances with 98% of Democrats, 89% of Independents and 77% of Republican united in the funding's importance.

Public support notwithstanding, this funding is essential to our continued progress as a nation in combatting a disease that more than 1.7 million Americans will be diagnosed with this year. More than 600,000 Americans will die from cancer in 2017, and it will cost our economy an estimated \$216 billion in direct treatment costs and lost productivity. Additionally, the number of cancer survivors now exceeds 15.5 million, requiring the NIH and CDC to do more to meet the needs of this unique and growing population.

As work on the FY18 budget now begins in earnest, we ask that you to ensure that the fight against cancer remains a top national priority. OVAC is asking Congress to provide the NIH with \$36.2 billion in FY18, including \$6 billion for NCI. This request includes funding provided through the 21st Century Cures Act. OVAC is also requesting a total of \$514 million for CDC cancer prevention and control programs in FY18. We hope that you will continue to protect federal funds for cancer research, prevention, nursing, and other important programs so that cancer researchers and healthcare providers can capitalize on the opportunities before them and patients receive the care they deserve.

Sincerely,

Alliance to Cure Kidney Cancer
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association for Cancer Research
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer
American Society of Clinical Oncology

¹ GS Strategy Group, One Voice Against Cancer Polling Memo, May 22, 2017.
http://ovaonline.org/documents/2017OVACPollingMemo_FINAL_000.pdf

American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Urological Association
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Cancer Support Community
Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research
Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Debbie-s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Friends of Cancer Research
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
International Myeloma Foundation
LIVESTRONG Foundation
Lung Cancer Alliance
Men's Health Network
National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions
National Brain Tumor Society
National Cervical Cancer Coalition
National Coalition for Cancer Research (NCCR)
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
St.Baldrick's Foundation
Susan G. Komen Advocacy Alliance
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer