



November X, 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Blunt, Ranking Members Cole and Murray:

As members of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a broad coalition of public interest groups representing millions of cancer patients, researchers, providers, survivors and their families, we are writing to you regarding funding for cancer research and prevention priorities as Congress moves toward completion of the FY 2020 appropriations process.

We are grateful for the continued bipartisan support of sustained funding increases for cancer research and prevention programs in both the House-passed Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill as well as Chairman Blunt's mark of the spending package. Below are our specific requests to be included in any final FY 2020 package.

Funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH): OVAC believes that sustained funding increases are necessary to ensure NIH's ability to support life-saving medical research. Therefore, Congress should fund NIH at \$42.1 billion, as provided in the Senate Chairman's mark.

Funding for the National Cancer Institute (NCI): OVAC is grateful to Congress for appropriating significant increases to NCI over the past four years. These investments are fueling discoveries in basic, translational and clinical research that will bring hope to more and more cancer patients and their families. However, on a percentage basis, those increases have not kept up with the increases to NIH overall during that time, even when including funding provided through the Cancer Moonshot. Between FY 2015 and FY 2019, funding for NCI rose 24 percent, compared with 29 percent for NIH overall.

While there is so much exciting progress that is taking place in the field of cancer research, it is also important to point out that NCI is experiencing a demand for research funding that is far beyond that of any other Institute or Center (IC). Between FY 2013 and FY 2018, the number of R01 (investigator-initiated) grant applications to NCI rose by 45.9 percent. For all other ICs during that time, the number of R01 applications rose by just 4.9 percent.

As a result of this extraordinary demand from the scientific community, coupled with funding increases that have fallen behind those of NIH overall, the success rate for research project grant applications at NCI has actually dropped in recent years – from 13.7 percent in FY 2013 to 11.3 percent in FY 2018. This is a situation unique to NCI. The success rate for NIH overall during that same period has risen from 16.8 percent to 20.2 percent.

OVAC understands that NCI is one of 27 ICs and NIH is responsible for research into thousands of diseases. We simply ask that Congress provide an increase for NCI that is at least proportional to the increase for NIH overall in the final FY 2020 bill. With a \$2 billion increase for NIH overall, a proportional increase for NCI would yield roughly the level provided in the House-passed bill, \$6.444 billion. If, as we hope, Congress can provide a larger increase for NIH overall, we urge you to devote a proportional share of that additional increase to NCI.

Funding for the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control (DCPC) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): DCPC at the CDC is a critical partner in the continued progress against cancer. DCPC leads the national effort to prevent and find cancers early and to improve the health of the more than 16.9 million cancer survivors around the country. To continue this work, OVAC requests that DCPC be funded at an over-all level of at least \$555 million. Within the DCPC, OVAC requests that Congress adopt a level of at least \$56.44 million as reflected in the Senate Chairman's mark of the FY 2020 LHHS Appropriations bill for the National Program Cancer Registries (NPCR). NPCR provides technical, operational and financial support for states to manage cancer registries. Cancer registries provide an over-all road map in the fight against cancer. Without them we would not have the data on state-specific cancer incidence data that helps identify trends and shifts in the burden of cancer for policy makers, researchers and the public. Additional funding will lead to the modernization of cancer registries by creating a cloud-based system that would have the capability to record data in real time and eliminate the current two-year lag in reporting.

Once again, thank you for your continued leadership on funding issues important in the fight against cancer. OVAC once again calls on Congress to sustain our nation's commitment to cancer research and prevention by increasing support for these efforts.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Dermatology
Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action
Network
American College of Surgeons
Commission on Cancer
American Institute for Cancer Research
American Society for Radiation
Oncology
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Urological Association
Association of American Cancer
Institutes
Bladder Cancer Action Network
Cancer Support Community
Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer
Research
Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Deadliest Cancers Coalition
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing
Stomach Cancer
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Friends of Cancer Research
Go2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy
Association
Intercultural Cancer Coalition
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Action Network
LIVESTRONG Foundation
LUNGevity Foundation
Men's Health Network
Mesothelioma Applied Research
Foundation
National Alliance of State Prostate
Cancer Coalitions (The Prostate Cancer
Alliance)
National Association of Chronic Disease
Directors
National Brain Tumor Society
National Cancer Registrars Association

North American Association of Central
Cancer Registries, Inc.
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Prostate Conditions Education Council
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Susan G. Komen
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
The Life Raft Group
Triage Cancer
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer
Education and Support Network
ZERO – The End of Prostate Cancer