

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2008

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services and Education  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services and Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh,

We're writing to urge the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education & Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee to provide the National Cancer Institute (NCI) with a minimum of a 9.5% funding increase for fiscal year (FY) 2009 as requested by the report prepared by the National Cancer Institute, *The Nation's Investment in Cancer Research: An Annual Plan and Budget Proposal for 2009*. This increase is critical to provide the resources necessary to advance the fight against the over two hundred different types of cancer, including the cancers for which we have yet to see significant progress.

We strongly support biomedical research and the great promise it holds in the development of new treatments and possible cures for the many types of cancer. Past investments at NCI have helped drive new discoveries that have led to an overall decrease in cancer deaths. Today, 2.4 million women are living with their breast cancer and making instrumental contributions to government, industry and the lives of their loved ones—all because of aggressive federal investment in medical research.

But, our work is far from done. Treatments and tools for breast, colon, and prostate cancers, which have benefited from the investment of federal research dollars, need to be improved. There are also many cancers which have been starved for funding and as a result have made little to no progress in the scientific discovery that could lead to effective treatments and early detection tools for patients.

For example, pancreatic cancer surpassed prostate cancer to become the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of cancer-related death in 2003, the same year that the NIH doubling effort was completed. Since 2003, over 165,640 Americans have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and 158,740 have died, largely due to the fact that there are currently no early detection tools and no treatments for the disease. The statistics are dire: over 75% of pancreatic cancer patients die within the first year of their diagnosis and 95% die within five years. Until the research advances, pancreatic cancer patients cannot hope to contribute to their families and society like other cancer patients.

The National Cancer Institute currently allocates less than 2% of its annual budget for pancreatic cancer research which is far less than what is actually needed to see meaningful progress for patients. According to the *National Plan to Advance Pancreatic Cancer Research*, a report

prepared by the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network's Scientific Advisory Board, we need an additional \$170 million to begin to find the answers these patients so desperately need.

Of the more than 5,000 research grants awarded annually by NCI in 2006, only 134 (approximately 3%) were categorized by the NCI as *at least* 50% relevant to pancreatic cancer research. In addition, fewer than 58 principal investigators had multiple grants or a primary career focus on pancreatic cancer. Young investigators are facing an even more daunting problem: only five grants for training and supporting young investigators as they begin a field of study have been awarded in the last three years.

We cannot let these trends continue for pancreatic cancer, or for the other overlooked and lethal cancers such as lung, liver, ovarian, brain, and blood cancers. There must be a new investment to see true progress in the most lethal cancers, as well as the many other types of cancer research where funding has fallen short, and it is vital to ensure the continued progress in research of all cancers.

While we recognize that Congress is typically reluctant to direct how NIH allocates research dollars, we respectfully request that you develop a FY09 LHHS bill that will provide the NCI with at least a 9.5 percent. This is the absolute minimal amount necessary to engage in work envisioned in the *National Plan to Advance Pancreatic Cancer Research* and to allow for continued progress in the fight against all types of cancer.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Ma G. Echow

Todd R. Platts

Eljaid E. Turmomingo

Jan Staley  
Lois Capps

Jim McDermott

Kath Ellison

Sam Bellini

~~Edna~~

Ailee

Sam A. -

Jim W. -

Jim Marshall

Jim Rematch

Nancy Boyda

R. A. New

~~Don. D. -~~ <sup>son</sup>

Mr Dye

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Bob Filner

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Bob Goodlatte

John Smith  
Jim Saxton

Jim Moran

Ed Clavin

Lee

John A. Boehner

Bill Parnell

Tom Davis

Tom Lill

Gre Green

Jenny Baldwin

Eleanore Holmes Norton

Del Rey

Elton Gallegly

Burns

## FY 2009 -- CANCER FUNDING LETTER

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Bilirakis, Gus	McGovern, Jim
Bishop, Tim	Miller, George
Boswell, Leonard	Moore, Dennis
Boyda, Nancy	Moran, Jim
Brady, Kevin	Nadler, Jerrold
Buchanan, Vern	Norton, Eleanor Holmes
Capps, Lois	Ortiz, Solomon
Carney, Chris	Pascrell, Bill
Clay, William Lacy	Pryce, Deborah
Davis, Tom	Ramstad, Jim
Doyle, Mike	Rangel, Charles
Ellison, Keith	Salazar, John
Etheridge, Bobby	Saxton, Jim
Ferguson, Mike	Schakowsky, Jan
Filner, Bob	Scott, Robert "Bobby"
Frank, Barney	Sessions, Pete
Gallagly, Elton	Sestak, Joe
Goodlatte, Bob	Smith, Adam
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Green, Gene	Space, Zack
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Inslee, Jay	Walz, Tim
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Kildee, Dale	Woolsey, Lynn
LaTourette, Steven C.	Wu, Daivid
LoBiondo, Frank	Yarmuth, John
Lynch, Stephen	