



December 11, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Vice Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Durbin, Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

As members of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a broad coalition of organizations that focus on the federal investment in cancer research, we urge you to work toward the enactment of a Fiscal Year 2021 (FY 2021) Defense Appropriations Act that includes significant funding for the Department of Defense's (DoD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program and its Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). The CDMRP funds high-impact research for cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship to support service members, their families, and the American public at-large. This funding is critical in the overall fight against cancer.

Within the CDMRP, the PRCRP has specifically been charged by Congress to support cancer research that impacts Service members and their families. Members of the military are exposed to hazardous environments due to the nature of their service and deployments and are therefore at risk for developing many types of cancers. By focusing on the gaps in cancer research with respect to unique situations and military environments, the PRCRP provides a valuable resource in cancer research.

The CDMRP's two-tiered grant review process as a whole is unique to the Federal Government, utilizing military program managers and patient advocates in addition to traditional peer-reviewers. This approach ensures that the DoD does not unnecessarily duplicate research funded by other institutions and, instead, aggressively complements that research by targeting critical gaps in science. The DoD's strategic approach has produced results and is helping win the fight against cancer.

We therefore urge you to support the Senate level of \$115 million for PRCRP, but as you work to finalize the FY 2021 package, we also ask you to maintain separate line items for existing programs listed under the Congressional Special Interest Medical Programs by not including them in the PRCRP. Additionally, we ask that you maintain the House report language confirming previously eligible categories of the PRCRP such as bladder, liver, blood, mesothelioma, endometrial, colorectal, brain, pediatric brain tumors, and others.

While all of these cancers are included in the FY 2021 House and Senate bill either within the PRCRP or as separate line items, we respectfully request that you maintain separate line items for breast, kidney, lung, melanoma, ovarian, pancreatic, prostate, and rare cancers instead of including them in the PRCRP.

Cancer can strike men, women, and children of any age, race, or socioeconomic level, including military service members and their dependents. Department of Defense strategic cancer research must continue for the health of our armed forces and their families.

On behalf of the millions of patients, survivors and their families who are fighting cancer, the members of OVAC urge you to support these important research initiatives in any final FY 2021 Defense Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association for Cancer Research
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Urological Association
Association for Clinical Oncology
Cancer Support Community
Children's Cancer Cause
Fight Colorectal Cancer
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
International Myeloma Foundation
KidneyCAN
Livestrong
Malecare Cancer Support
Men's Health Network
National Cancer Registrars Association
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Susan G. Komen
Triage Cancer