May 29, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Whip
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable John Cornyn
Minority Whip
United States Senate

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice-Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip
United States Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Majority Whip
United States Senate

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear House and Senate Leaders:

In recognition of May as National Cancer Research Month, we the undersigned organizations dedicated to the conquest of all forms of cancer, strongly urge you to make cancer research and biomedical science a national priority by providing at least $32 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and $5.26 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in FY 2015.
Strong support for NIH is essential if we are to conquer the devastating collection of the more than 200 diseases we call cancer, ensure that the current and next generations of researchers will be equipped to continue this mission, grow our nation’s economy, and remain at the forefront of medical research globally.

Over the past few decades, we have made significant progress against some forms of cancer, which is perhaps best demonstrated by the following statistics:

- Today, there are nearly 14 million cancer survivors living in the United States, 15 percent of whom were diagnosed 20 or more years ago.
- There have been more than 1 million fewer cancer deaths since the early 1990s as a result of declining death rates from cancer.
- Today, more than 68 percent of adults are living five years or more after their initial diagnosis, up from 50 percent in 1975;
- The five-year survival rate for all childhood cancers combined increased from 58 percent in 1975–77 to more than 80 percent in 2013.

In recent years, the acceleration in the rate of research advances against many forms of cancer has been remarkable. For example, in just the last 18 months, cancer patients now have access to:

- 13 new drugs to treat a variety of cancers
- 6 new uses for previously approved cancer drugs
- 3 new imaging technologies
- the first approval of a combination of targeted therapies for the same indication, and,
- the first high throughput sequencing machine that has been cleared by the FDA, which will help tailor treatments for patients

The progress we have achieved against many forms of cancer is the result of an extraordinary commitment on the part of researchers, such as the dedicated teams of scientists collaborating at cancer centers all across the country, patient advocates, and policymakers. Sustaining our country’s steadfast commitment to the NIH will result in continued improvements to the entire spectrum of patient care, from cancer prevention, early detection, and diagnosis, to treatment and long-term survivorship.

However, even in the face of tremendous progress, cancer remains a formidable opponent. An estimated 1.6 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer this year, and 1 in every 3 women and 1 in every 2 men will likely develop cancer in their lifetimes. It is also projected that more than 580,000 people will die this year in the U.S. from the disease, which is almost 1,600 people each day. In fact, cancer will account for nearly one in every four deaths, making it the second most common cause of disease-related death in the United States. It is further projected that by 2030, cancer will overtake heart disease as the leading cause of death in the United States. And there also remain a number of cancers, including pancreatic, liver, lung, ovarian and brain cancers, for which the mortality rate remains extraordinarily high and 5-year survival rates are typically less than 50 percent. Further, racial and ethnic minorities, as well as low-income and elderly populations, continue to suffer disproportionately in cancer incidence, prevalence, and mortality.

Because of the steady increase in cancer incidence rates, which is mainly due to our increasingly aging population, and the enormous complexity of many cancers, continuing and strengthening our nation’s commitment to cancer research and biomedical science is more critical now than ever. Therefore, investing in the NIH and NCI will play a vital role in addressing the current challenges in cancer, while at the same time curbing the overall annual costs of this devastating disease — which exceeded $263 billion in 2010, and the economic burden is expected to rise if the number of cancer deaths increases. Increased funding for both the NIH and NCI will help mitigate not only the recent cuts sustained by these vital
research institutions, but also begin the process restoring funding lost over a decade of essentially flat budgets. When factoring in the rate of biomedical inflation, the agency has lost nearly 25 percent of its ability to fund life-saving research since 2003. Furthermore, the current (FY 2014) NIH funding level actually remains lower than in FY 2012 because of the effects from sequestration, which resulted in a 5.1 percent cut to NIH’s and NCI’s budget in FY 2013.

The sequester cuts in 2013 had a significant impact on cancer research, resulting in the following:

- 640 fewer competitive research grants were issued, according to the NIH
- Approximately 750 fewer new patients were admitted to the NIH Clinical Center
- Phase I and Phase II clinical trials for cancer research were impacted at cancer centers throughout the country
- Promising young scientists were lost to research facilities overseas
- Research projects were shut down or paused, resulting in a direct impact to the research enterprise

Therefore, this all underscores why it is imperative that Congress invest fully in cancer research by providing the NIH with $32 billion and the NCI with $5.26 billion in FY 2015. A strong commitment to NIH and NCI will lead to more progress, more hope, and more lives saved. The millions of people who have faced a cancer diagnosis and their loved ones are relying on your support to conquer this devastating disease.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

American Association for Cancer Research
Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Gastroenterological Association
American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society of Radiation Oncology
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of Community Cancer Centers
Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Center
Boston Public Health Commission
Breast Cancer Action
Breast Cancer Research Foundation
Breast Cancer Comfort Site
C-Change
Cancer Support Community
Cancer Therapy and Research Center at the University of Texas Health Science Center
Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research
Chordoma Foundation
City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center
Community Service Center of Greater Williamsburg
Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University
The Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Daughters of Penelope
Deadliest Cancers Coalition
Debbie’s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Duke Cancer Institute
Esophageal Cancer Action Network (ECAN)
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Fox Chase Cancer Center
Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center
Friends of Cancer Research
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hepatitis Foundation International
Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center at Columbia University
Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Iowa
Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
LIVESTRONG Foundation
Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University
Lung Cancer Alliance
Lung Cancer Circle of Hope
LUNGevity
Malecare Cancer Support
Mayo Clinic Cancer Center
Medical College of Wisconsin Cancer Center
Melanoma Research Alliance
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
MESA Public Health Associates
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
Moffitt Cancer Center
MPN Research Foundation
National Brain Tumor Society
National Coalition for Cancer Research (NCCR)
Oncology Nursing Society
One Voice Against Cancer
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Preventing Colorectal Cancer
Prostate Cancer International
Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Center at Cedars Sinai Medical Center
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
St. Baldrick’s Foundation
Stanford Cancer Institute
Stephenson Cancer Center Board of Advocates
Stony Brook Cancer Center
Susan G. Komen
The George Washington Cancer Institute
The Nicholas Conor Institute
The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center--James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute
The Tulane Cancer Center
University of Alabama at Birmingham Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of Chicago Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of Colorado Cancer Center
University of Illinois Cancer Center
University of Kansas Cancer Center
University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center
University of New Mexico Cancer Center
University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
University of Texas Southwestern Simmons Cancer Center
University of Virginia Cancer Center
University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center
Us TOO International
Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center
Vermont Cancer Center
Wilmot Cancer Institute at the University of Rochester
Winship Cancer Institute at Emory University
The Wistar Institute Cancer Center
Yes! Beat Liver Tumors