



January 25, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a collaboration of more than 40 organizations representing millions of Americans affected by cancer, respectfully urges the Administration and Congress to make funding for cancer research and programs a priority in fiscal year (FY) 2006.

Prior investments in cancer research and programs have resulted in enormous health dividends. Since 1971, when President Nixon and Congress declared war against cancer, death rates have declined 57 percent. Today, nearly 10 million survivors are living with a history of cancer. Unfortunately, despite this progress, our fight is far from over. Cancer still strikes one out of every two men and one out of every three women, and this year alone, cancer will claim the lives of more than 560,000 Americans.

Public opinion polls consistently show that cancer is the disease most feared by Americans. Fortunately, the prior investments and national commitment to cancer research and programs have led to real progress. We are now at a point where reaching the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) goal of eliminating death and suffering due to cancer by the year 2015 is within our reach. However, we cannot reach this goal without the continued support of the Administration and Congress.

OVAC was heartened when you stated two years ago that "in order to win the war against cancer, we must fund the war against cancer," but we are very concerned by recent reports suggesting the Administration's budget for FY 2006 will propose a cut in the overall budget of the National Institutes of Health and other critical programs. Such a cut would be a major reversal in our nation's commitment to the fight against cancer.

Please know we appreciate that our nation faces many challenges and Congress has limited resources to allocate. However, we are very concerned that without increased funding for the key federal agencies involved in cancer research, education, prevention, awareness, treatment, and control, the nation will fail to make the gains necessary to achieve the NCI 2015 goal. For FY 2006, OVAC urges the Administration and Congress to support the following funding recommendations.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

\$30.1 billion (\$1.7 billion over FY 2005)

The tremendous investment our nation has made in the NIH has reaped remarkable returns and set the table for a period of unparalleled innovation in the fight against cancer and other diseases. For FY 2006, OVAC urges the Administration and Congress to provide \$30.1 billion for the NIH, a \$1.7 billion increase over FY 2005. This funding level will allow the NIH to maintain the current pace of discovery and innovation.

National Cancer Institute (NCI)

Support the NCI Professional Judgment budget, but at a minimum, provide \$5.21 billion (\$386 million over FY 2005) to maintain the current pace of progress.

For fiscal year (FY) 2006, OVAC endorses the professional judgment budget prepared by the NCI Director. This budget, which calls for \$6.17 billion for FY 2006, represents our national battle plan against cancer, outlining the critical core research that is currently underway as well as the most promising and extraordinary research opportunities. The budget is developed through an open and public process and reflects the best thinking of cancer researchers, patients, clinicians, and other constituency groups and is focused on the Institute's goal of eliminating suffering and death from cancer by the year 2015.

As previously mentioned, members of OVAC are very concerned by recent reports suggesting the Administration's budget for FY 2006 will propose a cut in the NIH budget. The members of OVAC, which collectively represent millions of Americans, plan to actively engage the Administration and Congress to ensure the NCI has the resources it needs to continue the progress being made in the fight against cancer.

OVAC recognizes the fiscal challenges facing policymakers, but does not believe that those challenges require us to diminish or weaken our national commitment to conquering cancer. While the long-term goal of providing adequate funding to explore the most promising opportunities must remain paramount, for FY 2006, OVAC urges the Administration and Congress to provide the NCI with at least \$5.21 billion, a \$386 million (8 percent) increase over FY 2005. This level of funding is the bare minimum required to protect our cancer research enterprise and maintain the current pace of discovery.

National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD)

\$207.88 million (\$11.74 million over FY 2005)

NCMHD was created by Congress to help address the undue burden of chronic and acute disease, morbidity and mortality, and lower survival rates borne by racial and ethnic minority groups, rural populations and other medically underserved. OVAC urges the Administration and Congress to provide the NCMHD with \$207.88 million for FY 2006 to advance its critical work coordinating and advancing health disparities research across the NIH. OVAC seeks to ensure that NCMHD has the resources to develop and enhance initiatives aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating disparities in many chronic diseases, including cancer. Having worked with Congress to establish the NCMHD, the members of OVAC are committed to seeing it fulfill its mission and achieve its goals and objectives.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Cancer Prevention and Control (CDC)

\$404 million (\$95.13 million over FY 2005)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) state-based cancer programs provide vital resources for cancer monitoring and surveillance, breast and cervical cancer screening, state cancer control planning and implementation, and awareness initiatives targeting skin, prostate,

colon, ovarian and blood cancers. For FY 2006, OVAC reiterates its requests for the following funding levels for these proven programs:

- **National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program: \$25 million (+\$9.13 million)**
The Comprehensive Cancer Control program provides grants and technical assistance to help states develop and implement plans addressing the cancers most significantly affecting their communities through prevention, early detection and treatment. OVAC's request will allow this program to be expanded and help more states implement plans that were previously developed.
- **National Program of Cancer Registries: \$65 million (+\$16.41 million)**
The National Program of Cancer Registries facilitates state tracking of cancer trends and subsequent allocation of resources to address specific needs, while also identifying highly effective cancer control programs that can be emulated across the country. OVAC's request will enable states to continue to collect and analyze high-quality data as well as evaluate existing cancer prevention efforts..
- **National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program: \$250 million (+\$45.54 million)**
OVAC appreciates the Administration's longstanding commitment to this important program that provides free breast and cervical screening tests to low income and uninsured women. Unfortunately, due to resource constraints, this highly successful program is only able to reach between 18-20 percent of eligible women. OVAC's request will allow more than 130,000 additional women to be screened through the program.
- **Colorectal Cancer Screening, Education & Outreach Initiative: \$25 million (+\$10.37 million)**
Strong scientific evidence indicates that regular screening and treatment is effective in reducing colorectal cancer incidence and mortality. However, screening rates for CRC are currently lower than for other cancer screening services. The Colorectal Cancer Screening, Education & Outreach Initiative helps increase public awareness of colorectal cancer, educate health care providers about colorectal screening guidelines and assist state programs with colorectal cancer priorities. With additional resources this program will be able to expand its awareness initiatives and reduce the number of preventable colorectal cancer deaths.
- **National Skin Cancer Prevention Education Program: \$5 million (+\$2.91 million)**
Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States and is largely preventable. OVAC's request will allow the program to educate the public about ways to protect themselves and reduce the risks of getting skin cancer.
- **Prostate Cancer Control Initiatives: \$20 million (+5.93 million)**
This initiative provides the public, with special emphasis on men and their physicians, with information about prostate cancer screening and early detection. OVAC's request will allow the program to expand and improve its outreach efforts.
- **Ovarian Cancer Control Initiatives: \$9 million (+\$4.434 million)**
The Ovarian Cancer Initiative partners with academic and medical institutions to spur discovery of techniques that will detect this cancer and develop more successful treatments. OVAC's request will speed the rate of progress that is being made and restore hope to the more than 25,000 women who will be diagnosed with this devastating illness this year.

- **Geraldine Ferraro Blood Cancer Program: \$5 million (+\$0.41 million)**
Authorized under the Hematological Cancer Research Investment and Education Act of 2002, this program was created to provide public and patient education about blood cancers, including leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma. OVAC's request will allow the program to continue to provide patients with educational, disease management and survivorship resources to enhance treatment and prognosis.

Health Resources and Services Administration, Nursing Workforce Programs

\$210 million (\$59.4 million over FY 2005)

Over the next 15 years, the number of Medicare beneficiaries with cancer is expected to double, while more than 1.1 million nursing positions go unfilled. The critical role of nurses in our health care system cannot be overstated. Oncology nurses are on the front-lines of the provision of quality care for cancer patients and are vital to administering chemotherapy, managing patient treatments and side-effects and providing counseling to patients and family members.

Without an adequate supply of nurses, there will not be enough qualified oncology nurses to provide quality, comprehensive cancer care to a growing patient population in need. Nurses are also vital to helping conduct cancer research through clinical trials, and a shortage will slow down the pace of medical research progress.

OVAC joins with the nursing community in asking the Administration and Congress to provide \$210 million in FY 2006 for the Nurse Reinvestment Act and the other nursing workforce programs. These programs will help address the multiple factors contributing to the nationwide nursing shortage, including the decline in student enrollments, shortage of faculty and poor public perception of nursing as a viable and worthwhile profession.

Thank you for your attention to these recommendations. We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to ensure that funding for cancer research and related programs is a top priority in FY 2006 and beyond.

Respectfully,

Alliance for Prostate Cancer Prevention (APCaP)
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association for Cancer Research
American Cancer Society
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Surgeons
American Foundation for Urologic Disease
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology
American Urological Association
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of State and Territorial Chronic Disease Directors
Breast Cancer Resource Committee, Inc.
Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation
Colorectal Cancer Coalition
Colorectal Cancer Network
EyesOnThePrize
Friends of Cancer Research

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
Lance Armstrong Foundation
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Men's Health Network
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
National Coalition for Cancer Research (NCCR)
National Prostate Cancer Coalition
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN)
Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition (PPCC)
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Trust for America's Health
United Ostomy Association
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network