



March 7, 2005

Dear Representative/Senator:

One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a collaboration of 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, we have made real progress. 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, prior investments in cancer research and programs have led to real progress. **We are now at a point where reaching the Administration's goal of eliminating death and suffering due to cancer by the year 2015 is within our reach.** However, we cannot reach this goal, which was established by the National Cancer Institute, without the continued support of the Administration and Congress.

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 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 professional judgment 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.

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 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 populations. 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 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. The registry provides critical data to ensure we remain on track in the fight against cancer. 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, millions of eligible women lack access to these critical tests due to lack of funding. The CDC estimates that the program currently only reaches 20 percent of eligible women aged 50 to 64. OVAC's funding request for FY 2006 would allow at least an additional 130,000 women to be served by the program.

- **Colorectal Cancer Screening, Education & Outreach Initiative: \$25 million (+\$10.37 million)**  
Strong scientific evidence has shown that regular screening and treatment is a cost-effective way to reduce 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  
Candlelighters Childhood Cancer 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 Foundation for Cancer Research  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
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