



July 13, 2005

Dear Representative:

We are writing to express our disappointment with the funding levels proposed in the Fiscal Year 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) appropriations bill for the fight against cancer. We advocated higher levels during the budget process and recognize the challenges faced by the Labor-HHS Subcommittee, which was forced to cut more than \$160 million from the FY 2005 funding level.

The Administration has set a bold goal – which OVAC supports - to eliminate suffering and death due to cancer by 2015. While this goal, which was established by the Director of the National Cancer Institute, is clearly ambitious, it is also attainable if we elevate cancer on the list of national priorities and implement the right policies such as providing adequate resources for cancer research and programs. Thanks to prior investments, we are making real progress. Between 1991 and 2001, cancer death rates declined by more than 9 percent, saving more than 258,000 lives over this ten-year period.

Unfortunately, the House Labor-HHS bill does not provide adequate resources to maintain this momentum. The National Cancer Institute would receive less than a one percent increase – far less than the amount necessary to even keep pace with the rate of inflation for biomedical research and development.

We also are disappointed by the proposed funding levels for the cancer prevention and control programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These state-based 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.

Finally, we are discouraged and concerned about the cut in funding for the nurse training and retention programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). 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 also are vital to helping conduct cancer research through clinical trials, and a shortage will slow the pace of medical research progress.

The fight against cancer is a priority for your constituents. Polling consistently shows cancer is the disease most feared by the public. Polls also show the public wants Congress to spend more on cancer research and programs – not less. More than 70 percent of Americans think the government is not doing enough to fund cancer research.

As the appropriations process moves forward, we urge you to put our nation on course to reach the 2015 goal by supporting higher funding levels for cancer research, cancer prevention, and nursing workforce programs.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Prostate Cancer Prevention
American Cancer Society
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology
Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation
Colon Cancer Coalition
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
International Myeloma Foundation
Lance Armstrong Foundation
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Men's Health Network
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition
Trust for America's Health
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network