



August 1, 2003

*Sent to full Senate in support of Feinstein amendment
United States Senate
Washington, DC*

Dear Senator <Member's Name>:

We are writing today as groups in One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a collaboration of more than 40 public interest groups representing more than 20 million Americans impacted by cancer, to ask you to support an amendment to the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (S. 1356) to provide an 8.5 percent increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for Fiscal Year 2004.

Cancer is the nation's number two killer and remains one of the nation's most urgent health care concerns. This year alone, more than 1.3 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer and more than 556,500 will die from this disease.

Research holds the key to improved prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, and subsequent follow-up care. Congress has shown exemplary bipartisan leadership in mounting an aggressive war on cancer, as demonstrated by the significant investment in the NIH budget over the past five years. We have begun to see some returns on this investment, but are on the cusp of further life-saving breakthroughs.

The amendment, which will be offered by Senator Dianne Feinstein, will help ensure that the NIH has sufficient funding to sustain and build on past successes as well as ensure continued development of new discoveries that benefit current and future cancer patients. In fact, during a hearing last year, Ruth Kirschstein, former Acting Director of the NIH, noted that the current pace of discovery could only be sustained with an increase of 8-10 percent.

The amendment is consistent with the recommendation made by OVAC and others in the health community as well as a solid, bipartisan majority of the Senate. As you know, the Senate adopted, by a vote of 96-1, an amendment calling for an 8.5 percent increase for

NIH during debate on the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Resolution. We hope you will support this amendment and see that this commitment carries through to the final bill.

Thank you for your continued commitment to defeat cancer.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support and Education (ALCASE)
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association for Cancer Research
American Cancer Society
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology
American Urological Association
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation
Colon Cancer Alliance
Eyes on the Prize
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
The Lance Armstrong Foundation
The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
Men's Health Network
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations (NABCO)
National Black Caucus of State Legislators
National Melanoma Foundation
National Prostate Cancer Coalition
NCCR (National Coalition for Cancer Research)
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
United Ostomy Association
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization