

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2004

Continue to Make Cancer Funding a National Priority

Dear Colleague:

We hope that you will join us in signing the attached letter urging Chairman Specter and Ranking Member Harkin to continue to make cancer funding a priority during the fiscal year 2005 appropriations process. While we recognize that our nation faces a tight budget and must make difficult fiscal decisions, we are grateful that we have always been able to come together on a bipartisan basis to support the fight against this devastating disease.

Since 1971, when President Nixon and Congress declared a war on cancer, our national investment in cancer research and programs has reaped remarkable returns – a 57 percent decline in cancer mortality rates. Molecularly-targeted drugs, such as Gleevec, that attack only cancer cells while leaving healthy tissue alone is one example of the remarkable advances that the public investment in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has generated.

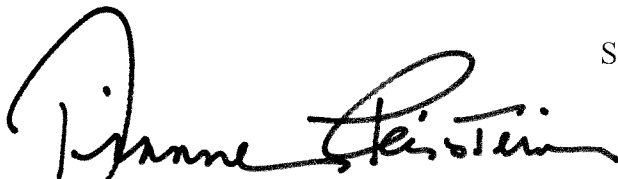
Winning the war against cancer requires a sustained investment in NIH research as well as in programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that translate the research into effective prevention, detection and treatment interventions. For example, the CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program has provided more than 3.5 million screening tests for breast and cervical cancer to low-income women. Unfortunately, funding constraints have limited the reach of this program to only 15 percent of eligible women.

We must also address the national nursing shortage. Nurses serve on the front-line in the battle against cancer, providing critical patient care services and also helping conduct cancer research through clinical trials.

Despite our progress, cancer remains the number two killer in the United States. This year, 1.3 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer and approximately 556,500 are expected to die – more than 1,500 people a day. In addition to lives lost, cancer costs our nation more than \$189 billion per year.

Please join us in this important effort. We must continue to make cancer funding a national priority. To be added to the letter or for more information, please contact Tamar Magarik with Senator Feinstein at 224-3841 or James Christoferson with Senator Hutchison at 224-5922.

Sincerely,



Senator Dianne Feinstein



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison



Senator Bill Nelson



Senator Lisa Murkowski

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The Honorable Arlen Specter, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Specter:

As Members of Congress concerned about the burden of cancer on our communities and the nation, we write today to urge you to make cancer funding a priority during the fiscal year (FY) 2005 appropriations process. While we recognize that our nation faces a tight budget and must make difficult fiscal decisions, we are grateful that we have always been able to come together on a bipartisan basis to find the resources necessary to advance the fight against cancer.

Cancer remains the number two killer in the United States. This year, 1.3 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer and approximately 556,500 are expected to die – more than 1,500 people a day. In addition to lives lost, cancer costs our nation more than \$189 billion per year. We can win the fight against this devastating disease but it will require a sustained commitment on the part of the Administration and Congress.

The tremendous investment our nation has made in the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including the National Cancer Institute and National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, has reaped remarkable returns. We urge you to continue our national commitment to research, allowing for unparalleled innovation in the fight against cancer in the years to come.

We also urge you to support the cancer prevention and control programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC applies the vital research conducted at the NIH to cancer prevention, screening and education programs that are implemented by communities across the nation. Finally, we ask you to help address the national nursing shortage by supporting the nursing programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration. Nurses serve on the front-line in the battle against cancer, providing critical patient care services and also helping conduct cancer research through clinical trials.

While we understand that our nation faces a growing deficit and difficult decisions must be made, we hope that you will choose to continue the federal commitment to the fight against cancer – a disease that touches the lives of nearly every American.

Sincerely,

cc: The Honorable Tom Harkin, Ranking Member