



December 4, 2006

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator _____:

On behalf of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a coalition of nearly 40 cancer-related organizations, we are writing in support of key federally funded cancer programs as Congress completes its work on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor/HHS) appropriations bill for fiscal year (FY) 2007. When the 110th Congress convenes in January, it will have to opportunity to reverse a disturbing trend that has resulted in vastly under-funding the National Institutes of Health (NIH) -- including the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) -- as well as the cancer control and prevention programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and important nursing workforce development programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

In FY 2006, NCI worked under its first funding cut in more than a decade. Those cuts have already resulted in significant scaling back and elimination of programs at NCI. According to NCI experts, maintaining current services would require an increase of \$296 million. During consideration of the FY 2007 Labor/HHS appropriations bill in the 109th Congress, NCI was at risk for having its budget cut in two consecutive years, something that has not happened since 1981-1982.

Maintaining adequate NCI funding is essential to the continued success of the world-class network of NCI-designated cancer centers around the country. These centers conduct cutting edge research that has resulted in new drugs to treat childhood leukemia, advances in imaging technology providing remarkable accuracy in detecting the damage caused by tumors and the development of colon cancer screening tests and treatments that have led to a 90 percent five-year survival rate for colon cancers caught in the earliest, localized stages. These are just a few examples of how our investment in cancer research has paid off and put us on the brink of exponential progress in the fight against cancer.

Congress also has the opportunity stand in support of programs outside of NCI that have been proven to be effective in preventing and detecting cancer. CDC's state-based cancer control and prevention 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. Many of these already under-funded programs are slated to receive cuts

under during consideration of the FY 2007 Labor/HHS appropriations bill. This was in addition to cuts for every single cancer program at CDC in FY 2006.

Finally, 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. Level funding the nursing workforce programs at HRSA as has been proposed will only hinder our nation's efforts to stem the nursing shortage.

Specific Funding Requests

The cancer community, through the OVAC coalition, has unified around a request of a \$240 million increase to NCI over the FY 2006 appropriated levels. That would bring total funding for NCI to just over \$5 billion, which is still far short of the \$5.9 billion proposed by the experts at NCI as part of the director's budget request. Given that cancer costs our nation some \$210 billion annually, the proposed investment makes sound fiscal sense.

In addition to NCI funding, OVAC supports the increases to cancer programs at CDC, efforts to address health disparities through NIH and investments in nursing through the HRSA. Those levels are as follows:

Program	FY06 Conference (in Millions)	OVAC Request	
		Amount (in Millions)	Difference from FY06 (in Millions)
National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities	\$195.41	\$200	\$4.60
Comprehensive Cancer Control Initiative	\$16.94	\$50.0	\$33.06
National Cancer Registries Program	\$48.11	\$65.0	\$16.89
National Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program	\$202.43	\$250.0	\$47.57
Colorectal Cancer Screening, Education & Outreach	\$14.48	\$25.0	\$10.52
Skin Cancer Prevention Programs*	\$2.07	\$5.0	\$2.93
Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign	\$13.93	\$20.0	\$6.07
Ovarian Cancer Awareness	\$4.52	\$7.5	\$2.98
Geraldine Ferraro Blood Cancer Program	\$4.54	\$5.0	\$0.46
Nurse Reinvestment Act/Nursing Programs (HRSA)	\$149.68	\$175	\$25

Five hundred, sixty-thousand Americans will die from cancer in 2006. We must remember that to win the war on cancer, we must fund the war on cancer throughout the appropriations process.

We would be happy to provide you with additional information about the progress we have made in the war against cancer, and the tremendous promise of our nation's cancer research, prevention, and treatment programs. Continuing progress requires a sustained commitment of federal resources and we respectfully request that you work with your colleagues to secure the highest possible funding levels for the important programs at NIH, CDC, and HRSA. To be successful, we cannot afford to scale back our efforts in this fight.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Prostate Cancer Prevention	Malecare Prostate Cancer Support
American Academy of Dermatology Association	Melanoma Research Foundation
American Association for Cancer Research	Men's Health Network
American Cancer Society	National Alliance for Hispanic Health
American College of Surgeons	National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology	National Coalition for Cancer Research
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum	National Foundation for Cancer Research
Association of American Cancer Institutes	National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network	National Prostate Cancer Coalition
Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation	Oncology Nursing Society
C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition	Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Colon Cancer Alliance	Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN)
Friends of Cancer Research	Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus	Sarcoma Foundation of America
International Myeloma Foundation	Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
Kidney Cancer Association	Society of Surgical Oncology
Lance Armstrong Foundation	Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society	
Lymphoma Research Foundation	