May 30, 2012

Dear House and Senate Leaders:

In recognition of May as National Cancer Research Month, we the undersigned organizations dedicated to the conquest of all forms of cancer, urge you to make cancer research and biomedical science a national priority by safeguarding funding for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and its parent agency, the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
As you know, the vigorous pursuit of new breakthroughs in cancer research and biomedical science not only saves lives, but it also serves as one of our country’s primary paths to innovation, global competitiveness, and economic growth. Most importantly, sustaining our country’s steadfast commitment to the NCI and NIH will result in improvements to the entire spectrum of patient care, from cancer prevention, early detection, and diagnosis, to treatment and long-term survivorship.

In the 40 years since the signing of the National Cancer Act of 1971, there has been an amazing acceleration in the rate of research advances against many of the 200 diseases we call cancer. Just a few examples of the extraordinary advances made against cancer are cited below:

- From 1990 to 2007, death rates from all cancers combined dropped by 22 percent for men and 14 percent for women, resulting in nearly 900,000 fewer deaths during that time.
- Today, more than 68 percent of adults live five years or more after diagnosis, up from 50 percent in 1975.
- Today, 80 percent of children live five years or more after diagnosis, up from 52 percent in 1975. The cure rate for childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia, the most common pediatric malignancy and once highly lethal, is now 80%.
- There are approximately 12 million cancer survivors living in the United States; 15 percent of them were diagnosed 20 or more years ago.
- Breast cancer death rates fell by about 28 percent from 1990 to 2006.
- Death rates from cervical cancer have dropped by nearly 31 percent from 1990 to 2006.
- Prostate cancer death rates have fallen by 39 percent from 1990 to 2006.
- Colorectal cancer death rates have fallen by 28 percent in women, and 33 percent in men.
- The survival rate for multiple myeloma has doubled in the past decade.
- Death rates from stomach cancer have fallen by 34 percent in women, and 43 percent in men.

This unprecedented progress against many forms of cancer is the result of extraordinary advances in research, combined with visionary public health policy and the passionate work of countless survivor and patient advocates.

Despite the significant advances in cancer research that have resulted in improvements in survival for many cancers, more than 570,000 people will die each year from the disease. In fact, more than 1.6 million Americans are diagnosed annually, and approximately 1 in every 3 women and 1 in every 2 men will develop cancer in their lifetimes. There also remain a number of cancers for which the mortality rate is extraordinarily high, including 8 forms of cancer with 5-year survival rates of less than 50 percent—pancreatic, liver, lung, multiple myeloma, ovarian, esophageal, stomach and brain cancers. Further, there are special population groups who continue to suffer adverse differences in cancer incidence, prevalence, mortality, survivorship, and burden of cancer or related health conditions.

Because of the looming crisis of rising cancer incidence and the enormous complexity of many cancers, continuing and strengthening our nation’s commitment to cancer research and biomedical science is more critical now than ever. The investments made in cancer research and biomedical science, particularly those supported by public funds through the NCI and NIH will play a vital role in addressing the current challenges in cancer, while at the same time curbing the overall annual costs of this devastating disease — which exceeded $263 billion in 2010.
Therefore, as you begin to craft the fiscal year (FY) 2013 appropriations bills and seek to address the sequestrations scheduled to go into effect in January of next year, we respectfully request that you acknowledge the importance of federal funding for cancer research and biomedical science by providing at least $32 billion for the NIH in FY 2013.

At a time when Congress is making difficult decisions about allocating federal funding for FY13, we cannot afford to reduce funding for cancer research, which is vital to our nation’s health and economic prosperity. Our ability to exploit new and exciting findings for the benefit of cancer patients is contingent on a strong, bipartisan commitment from Congress to provide the necessary funding for the NIH and NCI. Millions of current and future cancer patients and their loved ones are relying on your support to conquer this devastating disease that touches nearly every American.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Gastroenterology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Hematology
Asbestos Disease Awareness Association
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute
C-Change
Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at UC Irvine
City of Hope Cancer Center
The Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University
Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Deadly Cancer Coalition
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Duke Cancer Institute
Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Fox Chase Comprehensive Cancer Center
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
Friends of Cancer Research
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association
Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center, Columbia University
Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Iowa
Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina
Huntsman Cancer Institute
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
International Cancer Advocacy Network
International Myeloma Foundation
James Graham Brown Cancer Center at the University of Louisville
James P. Wilmot Cancer Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center
Kidney Cancer Association
Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University
Lance Armstrong Foundation
Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Loma Linda University Cancer Center
Lombardi Cancer Center, Georgetown University Medical Center
Lung Cancer Alliance
The Lustgarten Foundation
Malecare Cancer Support
Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center
Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota
Melanoma Research Alliance
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
Moffitt Cancer Center
National Brain Tumor Society
National Coalition for Cancer Research
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
National Pancreas Foundation
National Patient Advocate Foundation
New York University Cancer Institute
Oncology Nursing Society
One Voice Against Cancer
Oregon Health & Science University Knight Cancer Institute
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Research!America
Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute
Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins
Simmons Cancer Institute at Southern Illinois University
Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Washington University School of Medicine
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Comprehensive Cancer Center
Stanford Cancer Institute
Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance
Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami
The George Washington University Cancer Institute
The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center—James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute
Tulane Cancer Center
UC-Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center
UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center
UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of Arizona Cancer Center
University of Chicago Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of Cincinnati Cancer Institute
University of Colorado Cancer Center
University of Illinois Cancer Center
University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center
University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
University of Virginia Cancer Center
University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center
USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center
The V Foundation for Cancer Research
Van Andel Institute
Vermont Cancer Center
Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center
The Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University
The Wistar Institute Cancer Research Center
Yale Cancer Center