

May 27, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Capito:

The undersigned organizations, representing millions of patients with cancer, survivors of cancer, researchers, healthcare providers, and other advocates, write with gratitude and in strong support of your Senate Resolution recognizing May as National Cancer Research Month. This is a valuable opportunity to increase awareness of the vital role of cancer research in bringing hope to those impacted by cancer throughout our country and the world.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Cancer Act, landmark legislation that signified a bold national commitment to defeating cancer. In addition to expanding the authority of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Director and establishing the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB), the bill created the NCI Cancer Centers Program. Today, NCI-designated cancer centers around the country are leading the way in pioneering new research discoveries, serving patients in their communities, and training the next generation of cancer scientists and physicians. Over the past 50 years, sustained funding through the NCI has enabled these cancer centers to realize many of their goals, and continued federal support will be critical to their ongoing success.

Thanks in large part to the investments that you and your colleagues have made on behalf of the American people through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and specifically the NCI, we are in an era of unprecedented progress against the over 100 diseases we call “cancer”. Overall cancer death rates in the U.S. dropped by 31% between 1991 and 2018, a remarkable achievement made possible by numerous advances in cancer prevention, biology, detection, diagnosis, and treatment. Thanks to groundbreaking cancer research, promising developments in areas such as immunotherapy and molecularly targeted therapy hold the potential to treat and even cure more patients than ever before. Additionally, improved screening tests are now facilitating the early diagnosis of many more types of cancer, while molecular testing is allowing for the personalized selection of cancer drugs based on the presence of actionable mutations in patients’ tumors.

Despite this progress, mortality rates for certain cancer types continue to rise, and cancer remains the second leading cause of death in the U.S. Almost 1.9 million new cancer diagnoses are expected in 2021, and projections indicate that more than 608,000 Americans will die of cancer this year. While remarkable advances against some types of cancer have led to dramatically decreased mortality, for others there are few, if any, available treatments. Meanwhile, the benefits of cancer research have not been equitably distributed, with cancer disparities by race,

ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomic status, among other factors, leading to later diagnoses and poorer outcomes for so many Americans.

As we work together to find solutions to these challenges, our nation's continued investment in cancer research through the NIH and NCI is more critical than ever. We thank you for your strong and consistent support of these investments and look forward to working with you to ensure that NIH and NCI receive significant funding increases in FY 2022 and beyond.

Thank you again for your leadership on behalf of all Americans impacted by cancer. In this National Cancer Research Month, we celebrate the progress we have made together and look forward to the new advances that will bring us closer to our mutual goal of conquering cancer.

Sincerely,

American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Institute for Cancer Research
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Urological Association
Association for Clinical Oncology
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON)
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Cancer Forum of the American Public Health Association
Cancer Support Community
Children's Cancer Cause
Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Deadliest Cancers Coalition
ECAN Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
Global Liver Institute
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
GW Cancer Center
Hope for Stomach Cancer
KidneyCAN
Livestrong
LUNgevity Foundation
Mayo Clinic
Men's Health Network
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
Moffitt Cancer Center

National Brain Tumor Society
Oncology Nursing Society
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC)
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Susan G. Komen
The American Childhood Cancer Organization
The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
The Tisch Cancer Institute at Mount Sinai
The University of Kansas Cancer Center
Triage Cancer
University of Hawaii Cancer Center
University of Rochester Wilmot Cancer Institute