

TULSA WORLD

Letter to the editor: Support president's 'moonshot' cancer program

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By Sheppard F. Miers Jr., Tulsa

The need to increase cancer research is greater than ever.

The American Cancer Society's new annual report, Cancer Facts and Figures 2016, estimates 595,690 persons will die of cancer in the United States in 2016, or 1,630 people per day. About 1,685,210 new cancer cases are expected to be diagnosed in the nation in 2016. Oklahoma will have an estimated 19,650 new cancer cases and 8,260 Oklahomans will die of cancer this year. Oklahoma has the eighth highest cancer death rate of the 50 states.

The statistics reflect that lifesaving progress in fighting cancer has been nowhere near enough. On the positive side, there is more consensus in support of increased federal government funding of cancer research. Congress enacted a substantial increase of appropriations to the National Institutes of Health for cancer research in December. It is considering legislation to speed up clinical application of newly discovered treatments. This ought to help Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma become a National Cancer Institute Designated Cancer Center.

The "moonshot" for cancer discovery announced by the president to Congress in January and a task force for it led by Vice President Biden is bringing high profile attention to doing whatever is necessary to discover how to stop cancer as soon as possible.

That also can come from more people urging it be accomplished. You can help make it happen through the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network online. It tells you how to easily join in and advocate increased cancer research.

Editor's note: *Miers is director of the Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research.*