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Honorable John Sullivan
United States House of Representatives
5727 South Lewis, Suite 520
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105-7146

Re: Cancer Research and Prevention Funding

Dear Congressman Sullivan:

Thank you for meeting with Rebecca Sherwood and me on August 8 and discussing the outlook for federal government policy, leadership and continued funding for cancer research and prevention efforts, including those led by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Cancer Institute (NCI) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As we discussed, cancer is the leading threat to health in our country that reaches indiscriminately into every district represented in Congress. The disease causes death to more than 570,000 people in the United States each year, or one life taken by cancer every minute. It costs billions of dollars each year in medical care and lost productivity. The personal challenge and loss for victims of the disease and their families now occurring in Tulsa and every other community is immeasurable.

As volunteers of American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network that represents thousands of cancer patients, survivors and their families throughout the nation, we want to reconfirm our request that you support *funding for cancer research and prevention* at the NIH as a *priority* in the FY 2012 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. We urge funding of NCI and CDC for FY 2012 be approved at not less than levels of \$5.1 to 5.2 billion appropriated for recent fiscal years in order to sustain urgently needed research and prevention programs to control and cure cancer.

We know Congress has a difficult task in balancing priorities within the Federal budget. However, cuts to funding for ongoing cancer research and prevention programs would squander the progress made during the past few years and cause lasting harm to cancer patients and their families.



Congressional support for cancer research funding is responsible for much of the progress that has been seen in the fight against cancer. Today, nearly 1 in 20 Americans is a cancer survivor, thanks in part to the scientific advances made possible by taxpayers and appropriations to federal agencies leading that fight. Major advances have occurred. In the past year alone, federally funded research has led to life-altering cancer research breakthroughs.

For example, recent results from a ten-year lung screening trial sponsored by the NCI found the possibility that lung cancer deaths could be reduced by 20 percent through spiral CT screening. This breakthrough would not have been possible absent the long term federal investment in this important clinical trial. And very recently, in 2011, clinical trial results were announced that identified two (2) new treatments for melanoma, a disease for which effective treatments have been lacking. NCI funding supported the basic discoveries that were critical to the development of these new treatments.

Despite these successes, significant challenges remain. Progress for some types of cancer has not kept pace with overall improvements in survival rates. Moreover, cancer incidence and the financial cost of cancer to the United States are projected to nearly double by 2020, particularly among the aging Baby Boomer population.

Finally, it is important to note the importance of NIH funding to our nation's economy. The NIH budget supports medical research in every state, including Oklahoma. In turn, these research dollars support local jobs and economic development. In FY 2010, the NIH budget supported nearly 488,000 jobs across the country and produced \$68 billion in new economic activity.

For all of these reasons, we ask you to ensure that funding for cancer research and the NIH, NCI and CDC remains a top national priority.

Again, for Becky and myself, thank you for the opportunity to meet and discuss the importance of continued funding of cancer research and our request.

Yours very truly,

Sheppard F. Miers, Jr.

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cc: Rebecca Sherwood