

CHARLENE MIERS FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

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September 7, 2010

President's Cancer Panel
6116 Executive Boulevard
Suite 220, MSC 8349
Bethesda, MD 20814-8349

RE: *The Future of Cancer Research: Accelerating
Scientific Innovation*; 2010-2011 Meeting Series

Dear Members and Staff of the President's Cancer Panel:

Thank for conducting meetings on the subject of *The Future of Cancer Research: Accelerating Scientific Innovation*, the announcement of which is enclosed.

We applaud your decision to recognize the 40th anniversary of the National Cancer Act of 1971 and the creation of the National Cancer Program (NCP) in this way.

This letter is to furnish comments and suggestions we hope you will consider and act upon in this meeting series.

The Director of the National Cancer Institute observed in a note entitled *Prioritizing Cancer Research*, June 4, 2009, that it remains difficult for NCI to convey the same sense of urgency about cancer that the public feels about communicable diseases while, nearly four decades after creation of the National Cancer Program, it remains the case that one American dies of cancer every minute. The Director also noted that each of us, if we live a normal life expectancy, can anticipate that, at some time on this journey, we will feel the acute pain from hearing a diagnosis of cancer - for ourselves or for someone we love.

We believe the simple but compelling statistics the Director mentioned should be the driving force of the meeting series you have scheduled. A redefined and intensified National Cancer Program must be implemented to halt the toll being taken by cancer.

The second and third questions for exploration that you have listed for this subject are in our view the most significant, and the suggestions that follow are primarily in response to those questions. Our organization has prepared legislation that we believe would amend and add certain features to the National Cancer Act of 1971, to address the issues.

The proposed legislation we recommend, entitled the *Collaborative Urgent Research Effort (CURE) for Cancer Act of 2010*, would amend the National Cancer Act of 1971, to:

- (1) Specifically identify and define the “National Cancer Program”;
- (2) Change the President’s Cancer Panel to a National Cancer Commission, to be an administrative agency with regulatory authority to act in furtherance and support of the National Cancer Program and NCI;
- (3) Authorize adoption of a specific ongoing National Cancer Strategic Plan; and publication of comparable (side-by-side) periodic statements of progress in achieving its objectives in the form of a National Cancer Program Annual Report;
- (4) Identify and promote collaboration and coordination of all public and private sector cancer research projects, as parts of the National Cancer Program, while maintaining private sector intellectual property interests; and
- (5) Provide substantially increased and permanent appropriations to the NCI.

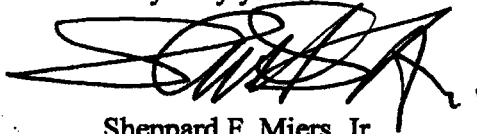
What we propose is to give express legislative authorization of a more well defined and inclusive “National Cancer Program”, with specific Congressional direction to make and publish a continuing detailed Strategic Plan of the Program, along with regular periodic, consistently presented and comparable reports to the nation on efficacy of the Program and achievement of objectives of the Strategic Plan. We believe this can help increase public and Congressional support of the national cancer effort to the level needed to win the war on cancer. A copy of that proposed legislation and a summary can be found at our internet website, www.cmfcf.org.

Although not yet a part of our proposed legislation, we also suggest the NCI and National Institutes of Health consider arranging for an independent expert evaluation of research projects conducted in the National Cancer Program, to be put in lay terms to the greatest extent possible. We suggest the evaluation include and/or take the form of a ranking of top research based on demonstrated efficacy in accomplishing the ultimate objective of the Program: the cure of cancer.

For this we suggest as a possible approach that an *Effective Cancer Science (ECS) Ranking*, from independent expert scientific panel review, perhaps from the Institute of Medicine, be published annually on extramural and intramural cancer research projects funded by The National Cancer Institute completed in the last five to seven years. It could rank projects based on efficacy in discovery on the cause, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure of cancer. This ranking could consider the purpose, subject, method, progress and reported findings of research projects. Demonstrated specific positive effect, both directly and indirectly, obtained from the most effective projects’ findings on prevention, treatment and cure of cancer could be emphasized in such ranking. Research project findings that have not yet yielded known advances or increased efficacy for the National Cancer Program could also be indicated.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this letter. If we can assist you in any other way please contact us at any time.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Miers, Jr.', written over a horizontal line.

Sheppard F. Miers, Jr.
Director

Enclosure

The Future of Cancer Research: Accelerating Scientific Innovation

MEETING DATES

September 22, 2010 October 26, 2010 December 14, 2010 February 1, 2011

BACKGROUND

- The year 2011 marks the 40th anniversary of the National Cancer Act of 1971 and the creation of the National Cancer Program (NCP).
- This anniversary is an excellent time to take stock of the past 40 years of cancer research, and it also provides an opportunity to explore potential future enhancements to the NCP.
- Advances in biomedical science, such as the sequencing of the human genome, combined with the benefits of the technological revolution, such as the development of the internet, have provided opportunities for increasingly efficient methods of research.
- These same biomedical and technological advances have raised medical, ethical, and legal issues that must be addressed as we progress toward a new vision of cancer research.

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Health Care Experts	Cancer-Related Organization Representatives
Biomedical Scientists	Bioethicists
Government Representatives	Advocates
Computer Scientists	Public Health Professionals
Social and Behavioral Scientists	Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology Industry Representatives

QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORATION

- How has the cancer research and advocacy landscape changed since 1971?
- What is the vision of the course of cancer research in the next 15 years and what new models of research, collaboration, communication, and funding are needed to achieve this vision of future cancer research?
- How can transformative change be promoted from within the National Cancer Program?
- How can we harness the incredible results of the technological revolution to speed us towards a new horizon of cancer research?
- What technologies not currently contemplated for use in cancer research might have application to research on cancer prevention, causation, and care and how can they be best utilized?
- What new collaborations are necessary to apply such technologies to cancer research and how can they best be developed?
- What new medical, ethical and legal issues will be encountered as we progress into a new era of science?
- What barriers (e.g., money, workforce/training issues) must be overcome to advance to a new era of cancer research and how can they be surmounted?

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Meetings of the Panel are open to the public; no registration is required.