

# TULSA WORLD

## Letter to the Editor: Fight cancer

BY Sheppard F. Miers Jr., Tulsa  
Tuesday, January 17, 2012  
1/17/2012 3:10:27 AM

American Cancer Society's Cancer Facts & Figures 2012 tells us it is going to take much more to beat cancer. Although incidence has declined slightly, there will be 1,638,910 new U.S. cancer cases in 2012.

In 2012, U.S. cancer deaths will increase to 577,190 (1,500 a day; one each minute) - nearly 1 1/2 times Tulsa's population.

Personal challenge, sacrifice and, too often, tragedy is behind each number. Some scientists and advocates say there would be a more promising future if the focus of cancer research were changed. National Cancer Institute information indicates a cancer cell process called metastasis, by which cancer tumor cells spread to other parts of the body, causes most cancer deaths. Yet, after more 40 years of the war on cancer, the complicated cause of metastasis remains unknown and generally there is no available cure.

Studying it effectively in humans is reportedly very costly and difficult. As a result, estimates indicate less than 5 percent of cancer research funding is provided to solve this deadly cancer cell mystery. Many talented and inspired scientists know the fundamental significance of the metastasis question and want to answer it. Those leading cancer research under the National Cancer Program should resolve in 2012 to put the highest priority on the life-saving discovery about metastatic cancer despite the expense and difficulties involved. And we should urge they be given and use every bit of the right science and technology needed.

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