

TULSA WORLD

Letter to the Editor: Cancer War Continues

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The war on cancer, with marginal success and a need for much more, continues in 2013. The American Cancer Society estimates 580,000 people of all ages are going to die of cancer in the U.S. this year, and 1.6 million new cancer cases will be diagnosed.

The National Cancer Institute reported this month that death rates continue to decline slightly for most common types of cancer, but are increasing for skin, liver, pancreatic and other cancers. Reduced smoking accounts for some mortality rate improvement. But discovering causes of cancer metastasis, the spread of malignant cells resulting in most deaths, appears to be far-off.

The 2013 budget proposal of NCI to the president indicates that cancer research funding since 2003 has not met inflation, nor taken full advantage of discovery opportunities linked to genetics. It recommends spending more now to find scientific answers.

Cancer involves huge costs, from more than a half a million deaths it causes, improved treatments expense and the complexity of the research involved. NCI funding advances cancer research and treatment in Oklahoma, including at Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma.

Our new First District congressman, Jim Bridenstine, favors spending federal government dollars carefully for the important needs of the country. So I have written him to support NCI's total recommended \$5.8 billion congressional funding of cancer research for fiscal 2013. It is a national priority. If you agree, take a few minutes to tell him so by email to his U.S. House of Representatives office website.

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