

CHARLENE MIERS FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

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Sheppard F. Miers, Jr.
President, Director

September 14, 2012

Honorable Tom Cole
2458 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NIH Research Grant to the Stephenson Cancer Center and National
Cancer Program Funding

Dear Congressman Cole:

This letter is about the important news for Oklahoma that the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City has been granted \$10 Million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct vital life saving cancer research.

Our organization, Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research, is an Oklahoma not for profit foundation which advocates increased cancer research and federal government funding of it.

~~This NIH cancer research grant to the Stephenson Cancer Center is an impressive example of partnership of state and federal institutions in scientific discovery for saving lives. The September 5, 2012, announcement of the Stephenson Cancer Center enclosed provides details and the research goals involved for Oklahoma scientists to find new more effective ways to control and cure cancer as part of the National Cancer Program.~~

The Stephenson Cancer Center and its leadership deserve credit for having the expertise, energy and commitment to bring this level of NIH funding to Oklahoma for an important effort in finding answers to some of the most difficult questions about cancer.

As a person whose wife died of glioblastoma brain cancer, one of the most treatment resistant forms of cancer, I am very encouraged by the purpose of this research grant, and of course pleased that scientists at the Stephenson Cancer Center were selected to conduct the study. More than 577,000 Americans are expected to die of cancer in 2012, which is one death in the United States every minute due to cancer. 7,800 Oklahomans are expected to lose their lives to cancer this year. 1,600,000 people will be newly diagnosed to have cancer in the U.S. this year. The harsh statistics about cancer are unpleasant but must be recognized to comprehend the urgency of our need for research.

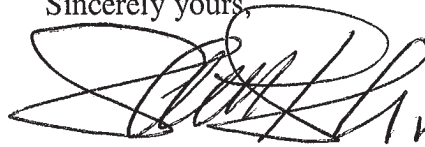
This grant to the Stephenson Cancer Center to find ways to end the loss and suffering caused by cancer reflects the importance of continued NIH funding.

Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research is a member of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a collaborative group of more than thirty U. S. cancer research funding and advocacy organizations. OVAC's principal objective is to provide Congress a unified recommendation for appropriations to the NIH and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to further and accomplish the purposes of the National Cancer Program.

OVAC's funding recommendation of appropriation for Fiscal Year 2013 of \$32.6 Billion to NIH and appropriation of \$5.3 Billion to NCI is enclosed.

We ask you to support and vote for appropriation of at least these amounts to the NIH and NCI for FY 2013 for funding of the National Cancer Program and to provide more grants to inspired institutions like the Stephenson Cancer Center to do the complex research needed to discover how to cure cancer.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheppard F. Miers, Jr.', written over a large, stylized, scribbled-out area.

Sheppard F. Miers, Jr.

Enclosure

\$10 Million Grant Advances Fight Against Cancer

Cancer Center Researchers Target Treatment-Resistant Cancers

September 5, 2012

Oklahoma City - A \$10 million grant from the National Institutes of Health will enable researchers at the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma to look for answers to a critical problem in cancer therapy – why some cancer cells become resistant to chemo and radiation therapy, and what can be done to overcome that resistance. The Center of Biomedical Research Excellence grant will augment and strengthen research at the Stephenson Cancer Center by establishing a mentoring program for promising new cancer researchers and enhancing the research infrastructure at the cancer center.

“This important grant is evidence that the Stephenson Cancer Center at OU is rapidly becoming recognized as a center of excellence in cancer research and treatment,” said OU President David L. Boren.

“This is a substantial and important grant that further enhances our mission to defeat cancer through research and advanced care,” said Robert Mannel, M.D., director of the Stephenson Cancer Center. “The CoBRE grant creates a powerful synergy of effort. It pairs experienced senior researchers as mentors and talented junior researchers with promising new ideas. Together, they will work to advance research aimed at the development of new treatments and technologies, and ultimately a cure for cancer.”

The grant’s Principal Investigator is Danny Dhanasekaran, PhD, Deputy Director for Basic Research at the Stephenson Cancer Center and professor of Cell Biology at the OU College of Medicine. He will lead the team of investigators as they aim to develop novel treatment strategies for cancer resistance. Cancer resistance often becomes acute after an initially successful cancer treatment.

"All too often, the cancer comes back, and when it does, it is usually in a more resistant form. If you have a thousand cancer cells, every ten cells will become resistant. The ten cells become hundreds. Hundreds become thousands and thousands become ten thousands," said Dhanasekaran, who holds the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation Endowed Chair in Cancer Research.

When the returning cancer becomes resistant, treatment options are limited. The CoBRE grant will fund research at the Cancer Center aimed at determining why cancer cells become resistant. "If we understand the mechanisms of the resistance, then we can develop strategies to prevent it," Dhanasekaran said.

Through the CoBRE grant, experienced researchers will mentor Junior Promising Investigators at the Cancer Center as together they focus on four projects designed to discover the resistance mechanisms in four types of cancer: breast, lung, prostate, and brain.

CoBRE grants are awarded by the NIH in an effort to augment and strengthen research. The grants allow bright, new researchers to advance their work under the guidance and mentorship of experienced, senior researchers in the field.

In addition to overseeing the success of the overall CoBRE grant, Dr. Dhanasekaran also will serve as mentor on the project that targets drug resistance in prostate cancer treatment.

Dhanasekaran likens the problem to a driver traveling to the airport.

"When you go to the airport, and there is a roadblock, what do you do? You take the side road," he said.

Similarly, the returning, resistant cancer cells look for "the alternate route" to spread. The researchers will look for strategies to block the "side roads" or multiple pathways so that cancer cells cannot escape.

Initially, Cancer Center researchers will analyze mechanisms of resistance using samples obtained from human cancer tissues. However, Dhanasekaran hopes the work will lead to additional laboratory research and clinical trials in the future.

Dhanasekaran predicts the grant, the research and the resulting technologies will be extremely beneficial as the Stephenson Cancer Center continues its work to advance the fight against cancer in an effort to provide new hope, new treatments and ultimately a cure for those with cancer in Oklahoma and throughout the world.

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Program	FY11		FY12			FY13		
	Appropriations Amount (in Millions)	OYAC Recommendations Amount (in Millions)	Enacted Amount (in Millions)	Difference from FY11	% Change from FY11	OYAC Recommendations Amount (in Millions)	Difference from FY12	% Change from FY12
Investing in Cancer Research								
National Institutes of Health ¹	\$30,399.19	\$35,000	\$30,698	\$299	1.0%	\$32,698	\$2,000	6.5%
National Cancer Institute	\$5,058.58	\$5,740	\$5,081	\$23	0.5%	\$5,362	\$280	5.5%
National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities	\$209.71	\$229	\$277	\$67	32.1%	\$292	\$15	5.5%

Investing in Cancer Prevention and Control Programs

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cancer and Tobacco Programs								
Comprehensive Cancer Control Initiative	\$20.31	\$50	\$20	\$0	0.0%	\$50	\$30	146.1%
National Cancer Registries Program	\$50.30	\$65	\$50	\$0	0.0%	\$65	\$15	29.2%
National Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program	\$206.00	\$275	\$206	\$0	0.0%	\$275	\$69	33.5%
Colorectal Cancer Screening, Education & Outreach	\$43.07	\$70	\$43	\$0	0.0%	\$70	\$27	62.5%
Skin Cancer Prevention Programs	\$2.15	\$5	\$2	\$0	0.0%	\$5	\$3	132.6%
Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign	\$13.19	\$25	\$13	\$0	0.0%	\$25	\$12	89.6%
Ovarian Cancer Control Initiative	\$4.91	\$10	\$5	\$0	0.0%	\$10	\$5	103.7%
Geraldine Ferraro Blood Cancer Program	\$0.00	\$6	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$4.67	\$5	100.0%
Gynecologic Cancer and Education and Awareness (Iohama's Law)	\$0.00	\$10	\$5	\$5	n/a	\$10	\$5	100.0%
Office of Smoking and Health ²	\$108.69	\$125				\$125		
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Patient Navigator Program	\$4.99	\$10.0	\$0.0	(\$5)	-100%	\$5	\$5	n/a
HRSA Title VIII Nursing Programs	\$242.39	\$313.1	\$252.3	(\$10)	-4%			
Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Secretary - Childhood Cancer Research and Awareness	\$4.00	\$30				\$4	\$4	100%
Investing in Regulatory Programs to Improve the Pipeline of Delivery								
Food and Drug Administration	\$2,447	\$2,857	\$2,497	\$50	2%			

NOTE: FY11 and FY12 funding levels do not include funds from Prevention and Public Health Fund.