

DEADLIEST CANCERS COALITION

July 8, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Energy & Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette, Ranking Member
Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee
Energy & Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member DeGette:

As members of the Deadliest Cancers Coalition, a collaboration of national non-profit organizations focused on addressing policy issues related to our nation's most lethal cancers, we are pleased to offer our support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding provisions included in the 21st Century Cures Act (H.R. 6).

The deadliest cancers are defined by the Recalcitrant Cancer Research Act (Public Law 112-239), a bill that passed Congress thanks to your leadership, as those with a five-year survival rate below 50 percent. While various types of cancers fall under this definition, it is worth noting that nearly half of the 589,430 cancer deaths expected in 2015 will be caused by eight site-specific cancers: ovary, myeloma, brain, stomach, esophagus, lung, liver, and pancreas.

Some of the similarities that unite these cancers are that there are few early detection tools and/or effective treatments, and that more research is desperately needed to change the extraordinarily low survival rates. But there is hope for many of these diseases. In fact, as a direct result of the Recalcitrant Cancer Research Act, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has released "scientific framework" reports outlining priority areas of research focus for pancreatic cancer and small cell lung cancer. These reports demonstrate the vast potential for progress in diseases that are currently among our nation's leading killers. Similarly, data that has recently come out of The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) focusing on glioblastoma, stomach, and esophageal cancers provide a path that could lead to critical answers for these diseases. The significant taxpayer dollars that have been committed to these initiatives could be wasted unless NCI has the resources to leverage their promise. By increasing NIH's annual authorization by approximately \$1.5 billion for each of three years and creating a new mandatory Innovation Fund of \$1.75 billion per year, the 21st Century Cures Act holds great promise for providing these critical resources.

On behalf of the millions of Americans impacted by a deadly cancer each year, we commend your leadership in developing bipartisan legislation to address NIH funding.

Sincerely,

American College of Gastroenterology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
Blue Faery: The Adrienne Wilson Liver Cancer Association
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hepatitis Foundation International
International Myeloma Foundation
Lung Cancer Alliance
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
National Brain Tumor Society
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
National Pancreas Foundation
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
TargetCancer Foundation