

DEADLIEST CANCERS COALITION

July 17, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on LHHS
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole:

As members of the Deadliest Cancers Coalition, a collaboration of national nonprofit organizations focused on addressing issues related to our nation's most lethal cancers, we are writing to thank you for your leadership in crafting a Fiscal Year 2018 LHHS Appropriations bill that makes medical research funding a priority despite an overall cut in the allocation for the bill. The bill, which was approved by the House LHHS Subcommittee last week, includes a \$1.1 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and an \$82 million increase for the National Cancer Institute (NCI)

When it passed the Recalcitrant Cancer Research Act (Public Law 112-239), Congress defined the deadliest or recalcitrant cancers as those with a five-year survival rate below 50 percent. While a variety of cancers fall under this definition, nearly half of the cancer deaths that will occur this year will be caused by seven site-specific cancers: ovary, brain, stomach, esophagus, lung, liver, and pancreas. Although each is unique, the nation's deadliest cancers present some common challenges: (1) there are few early detection tools and/or effective treatments and (2) research is desperately needed to change their persistently low survival rates.

Continuing to build upon the \$2 billion increases for NIH provided in the last two years and on the potential promise offered by the 21st Century Cures Act is critical to addressing these challenges. We fully understand the challenging nature of developing a FY 2018 budget that addresses these goals given the current budget caps, but are concerned that nearly half of the funding increase is achieved by supplanting regular annual appropriations with 21st Century Cures Act funding.

We greatly appreciate your remarks that you regard the medical research funding in this bill as a "floor, not a ceiling" and your pledge to work on a bi-partisan basis and with the Senate to improve the funding levels as the bill moves through the process. As this process moves forward, we respectfully ask that you work toward providing both streams of funding – strong annual appropriations and the initiative-specific short-term funding provided for the Cancer Moonshot by the 21st Century Cures Act. Your on-going support for biomedical research is

critical to our ability to get new treatments and early detection tools to Americans diagnosed with our nation's deadliest cancers.

The Deadliest Cancers Coalition greatly appreciates your continued leadership and stands ready to work with you to support a final LHHS bill that provides robust funding for cancer research through regular appropriations and the specific projects included in the Cancer Moonshot. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Megan Gordon Don at mgdon@mgdstrategies.com or 202.246.8095.

Sincerely,

American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American College of Gastroenterology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Liver Foundation
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
Blue Faery: The Adrienne Wilson Liver Cancer Association
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Digestive Disease National Coalition
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
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
TargetCancer Foundation