

DEADLIEST CANCERS COALITION

November 30, 2017

Norman E. Ned Sharpless, MD
Director
National Cancer Institute
Building 31
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892-2090

Dear Dr. Sharpless:

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 congratulate you on your appointment as the Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Our coalition was first created in 2008 and has worked together to increase awareness about the cancers for which we have seen the least amount of progress. 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: brain, esophagus, liver, lung, ovary, pancreas, and stomach. Although each is unique, the nation's deadliest cancers present some common challenges: (1) there are few early detection tools and/or effective treatments, (2) patients with these cancers can present different benefit-risk profiles from patients with other cancers that have important implications for clinical research, and (3) far more basic, translational and clinical research is desperately needed to change their persistently low survival rates.

We have made some progress. The NCI has taken important steps to implement the Recalcitrant Cancer Research Act for pancreatic adenocarcinoma and for small cell lung cancer and has begun to take new steps to address other deadliest cancers. Also, this year, the five-year relative survival rate for myeloma increased to 50 percent, meaning that this disease has "graduated" out of the statutory definition. Our goal is to not only see progress on cancers like myeloma continue, but to reach a point in which there are no cancers that fall under the deadliest cancers definition. We still have far to go to make this goal a reality and so look forward to working with you to find new ways in which we can partner to improve survival for our nation's deadliest cancers.

We would like to invite you to join us at our annual in-person meeting on Wednesday, January 10 in Washington, DC to discuss your thoughts on the deadliest cancers and ways in which we can partner together to make progress in improving survival, including hearing

your perspective on the successes of the Recalcitrant Cancer Research Act to-date and how it can be used to spur progress in other of the deadliest cancers. The meeting will be held from 10am-3pm and we would be happy to welcome you to participate for an hour during that time. Please contact Megan Gordon Don at mgdon@mgdstrategies.com or 202.246.8095 with any questions or to arrange your participation in the annual meeting.

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
International Myeloma Foundation
Lung Cancer Alliance
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
National Brain Tumor Society
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
National Pancreas Foundation
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
TargetCancer Foundation