

# DEADLIEST CANCERS COALITION

October 31, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman, LHHS Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, LHHS Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

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 including a \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Fiscal Year 2018 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations (Labor-HHS) spending bill approved September 7 by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Your on-going support for medical research is critical to our ability to get new treatments and early detection tools to Americans diagnosed with our nation's deadliest cancers.

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 and (2) research is desperately needed to change their persistently low survival rates.

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. Your ongoing leadership in championing continued increases for medical research, such as those you have championed over the last three years, are critical in our efforts to make this goal a reality.

We ask that you now take the next step and work together with your colleagues to raise the FY 2018 budget caps and enact spending bills that allow the NIH and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to realize the full potential of the funding levels approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee and removes the threat of sequestration for FY 2018 and in the future.

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