

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2009

HELP CURE CANCER: DOUBLE THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE'S BUDGET

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us in sending the attached letter to Labor, HHS, and Education Subcommittee Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter requesting \$6 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for FY 2010 and a long term commitment to double the NCI's budget over the next five years. The \$6 billion request is an increase of 20 percent over FY 2009.

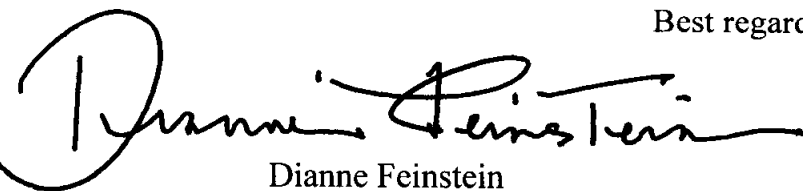
We ask that you lend your support to financing research that may lead to cures for cancer in our lifetimes. We are at a real turning point for cancer research, but whether we actually turn that corner will depend on available resources.

Investing in medical research is a critical component of health system reform. Clinical trials provide a basis for informed health care decision making by our country's health care providers. Our investment in cancer research begins with the positive impact it will have on our fight against cancer and extends to our state and local economies, while indirectly aiding efforts to improve health care quality, efficiency and affordability.

It is expected that 565,650 deaths in United States in 2008 will be attributable to cancer. While there has been progress in increasing the survival rate of cancer overall, this calls for optimism, not complacency. In fact, half of all cancer deaths will be caused by eight forms of cancer with five-year survival rates of less than 50 percent. Strained NIH and NCI budgets have limited the resources devoted to these deadly cancers. We can no longer let these cancers lag behind in scientific discovery.

We hope you will join us in the request for FY 2010 funding and our effort to double the NCI budget. If you would like to sign the letter, please contact Kristin Wikelius of Senator Feinstein's staff at 224-3841.

Best regards,



Dianne Feinstein



Kay Bailey Hutchison

Date

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

We are writing to urge the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) to provide the National Cancer Institute (NCI) with \$6 billion in funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010. Now is the time to renew our government's federal commitment to finding cures in our time.

Thanks to strong research programs created by Congress, the average five-year survival rate for all cancers is now 66 percent, and there are even a few cancers for which survival is more than 80 percent. While for each cancer there are significant areas of research to pursue, the greatest challenges remain for those cancers with the highest mortality rates. In fact, *half* of the 565,650 cancer deaths expected in 2008 will be caused by eight forms of cancer with five-year survival rates of less than 50 percent: ovarian (45%); brain (35%); myeloma (35%); stomach (24%); esophageal (16%); lung (15%); liver (11%); and pancreatic (5%). There has historically been little research focused on these cancers, and this problem has been further compounded due to the recent decreasing National Institutes of Health and NCI budgets.

We ask the LHHS Subcommittee for a commitment to double federal funds for the NCI over the next five years and for a FY 2010 appropriation of \$6 billion, an increase of 20 percent over FY 2009. Even at \$6 billion, our request is \$1 billion less than what the NCI submitted in its FY 2010 professional judgment budget request. We are supportive of the NCI budget, yet sensitive to the Subcommittee's challenge to do more with fewer resources.

Investing in medical research should be viewed as a critical component of any health system reform effort. Clinical trials provide the basis for informed health care decision making by our country's health care providers. When health care professionals provide evidence-based care, patient quality improves and cost savings become possible. Our investment in cancer research begins with the positive impact it will have on our fight against cancer and extends to our state and local economies, while indirectly aiding efforts to improve health care quality, efficiency and affordability.

We are at a real turning point for cancer research, but whether we actually turn that corner will depend on available resources. We respectfully request that you support a FY 2010 LHHS appropriations bill that will provide the NCI with \$6 billion in funding to continue the fight against cancer. We appreciate your consideration of our request.