

National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month
Statement for the Record
September 10, 2007

Mr. President, I rise in support of S.Res.222, a resolution that recognizes November as National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. This resolution represents a way to educate communities across the nation about pancreatic cancer and the need for increased research funding, early detection methods, and effective treatments and educational programs. I am pleased to be joining my colleague, Senator Clinton, as the lead sponsor of this important measure.

Like many Americans, I have seen the ramifications of cancer first hand. I support this resolution in honor and loving memory of the millions of Americans who have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and their families, and for my mother, Jessica Udall Smith, whom I lost to this killer.

Pancreatic cancer is hard to detect in its early stages as it doesn't cause symptoms right away. Also, because the pancreas is hidden behind other organs, health care providers cannot see or feel the tumors during routine exams. Because there are no early detection methods, pancreatic cancer often is found late and spreads quickly.

This year, more than 37,000 Americans will receive a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer and for over 33,000 of them their diagnosis will ultimately end in their death. While overall cancer death rates have declined, the number of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer is increasing. It is projected that this year, 440 Oregonians will die from pancreatic cancer. That represents a 17 percent increase in pancreatic cancer deaths in Oregon over the last three to four years.

Pancreatic cancer has been forced into the national spotlight in recent weeks. On August 18, 2007, Michael Deaver, one of former President Ronald Reagan's closest advisors succumbed to the disease at age 69. Just last week, famed opera singer Luciano Pavarotti died after a yearlong battle at age 71. Something that is striking about both of their cases is that despite their celebrity and contacts, neither man had much more than a fighting chance of overcoming this disease. There are simply no curative treatments – experimental or FDA approved – that currently are available to fight this disease, even when price is no object.

Individuals fighting pancreatic cancer continue to face discouragingly low odds of survival. In 1975, the five year survival rate for pancreatic cancer was two percent. Twenty-five years later, the survival rate remains at an unacceptably low level of five percent, making this cancer the fourth leading cause of cancer-related death. Indeed, pancreatic cancer is considered the deadliest cancer, of which 75 percent of patients diagnosed with this disease die within the first year and most within the first three to six months. Early detection tools, such as those that currently are available for ovarian, colon, breast and prostate cancer, would make a significant impact on pancreatic cancer,

but those tools require a new investment in basic scientific research at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

I support biomedical research and the great promise it holds in the development of new treatments and possible cures for the many types of cancer, including pancreatic cancer. Past investments at the NCI have helped drive new discoveries that led to the decline in overall cancer deaths in the U.S. for the second consecutive year. Now is the time to expand our efforts in the fight against pancreatic cancer, but that will be impossible unless we find a way to secure more funding for the NCI.

The Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Network is a national organization that is working to comprehensively address the problem of pancreatic cancer by providing patient support, advancing research, and creating hope. I support their efforts to raise awareness of this disease and believe that it is important that we recognize November as National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month.

I ask my colleagues support this resolution, which will help increase research, education and awareness for pancreatic cancer.

Thank you, Mr. President.

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES.

Supporting the goals and ideals of Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. SMITH) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of Pancreatic Cancer
Awareness Month.

Whereas over 37,170 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year in the United States;

Whereas pancreatic cancer is the 4th most common cause of cancer death in the United States;

Whereas 75 percent of pancreatic cancer patients die within the first year of their diagnosis and only 5 percent survive more than 5 years, making pancreatic cancer the deadliest of any cancer;

Whereas there has been no significant improvement in survival rates in the last 25 years and pancreatic cancer research is still in the earliest scientific stages;

Whereas there are no early detection methods and minimal treatment options for pancreatic cancer;

Whereas when symptoms of pancreatic cancer generally present themselves, it is too late for an optimistic prognosis, and the average survival rate of those diagnosed with metastasis of the disease is only 3 to 6 months;

Whereas the incidence rate of pancreatic cancer is 40 to 50 percent higher in African Americans than in other ethnic groups; and

Whereas it would be appropriate to observe November as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month to educate communities across the Nation about pancreatic cancer and the need for research funding, early detection methods, effective treatments, and treatment programs: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Senate supports the goals and
- 2 ideals of Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month.