

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 03, 2006

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense, Chairman  
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 119  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense, Ranking Member  
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 119  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens and Senator Inouye:

There are still 40,000 women who die each year of breast cancer. We don't know how to prevent the disease. We don't know how to detect it truly early. And we don't know how to cure it for any individual woman. This year alone, more than 258,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. This is a serious health issue that must be addressed. That is not to say it is the only issue, but it is one that must be a national priority. We may have increased awareness about breast cancer, but we still don't have the answers. While we don't have the answers to breast cancer, we do have the power to find the answers.

You and your Committee have shown great determination and leadership in searching for the answers by funding the Department of Defense (DOD) Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) at a level that has brought us closer to eradicating this disease. The DOD BCRP's twelve years of progress in the fight against breast cancer has been made possible by this Committee's investment in breast cancer research.

To continue this unprecedented progress, **we ask that you support a \$150 million appropriation for fiscal year (FY) 2007.** While the program was cut back from \$150 million to \$127.5 million last year, there continues to be excellent science that goes unfunded. That is why **we believe that \$150 million should be appropriated for the BCRP for FY 2007.**

The DOD Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program has established itself as model medical research program, respected throughout the cancer community for its innovative and accountable approach. The groundbreaking research performed through the program has the potential to benefit not just breast cancer, but all cancers, as well as other diseases. Biomedical research is being transformed by the BCRP's success.

Since the program's inception in 1992, there have been incredible discoveries at a very rapid rate that offer fascinating insights into the biology of breast cancer. The program funded a vital component of the revolutionary work that led to the development of the innovative drug Herceptin, the first monoclonal antibody in the war against cancer. From new methods of extracting breast cancer cells at their earliest stages to unprecedented research into gene/environment interaction to quality of life issues, this program leads the way in innovative approaches to breast cancer prevention, treatment and early detection. These discoveries have brought into sharp focus the areas of research that hold promise and will build on the knowledge and investment we have made.

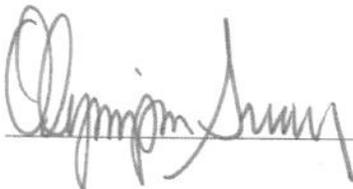
The DOD BCRP is as efficient as it is innovative. In fact, 90% of funds go directly to research grants. The flexibility of the program allows the Army to administer it in such a way as to maximize its limited resources. The program is able to quickly respond to current scientific advances, and is able to fill gaps by focusing on research that is traditionally under-funded. It is also responsive, not just to the scientific community, but also to the public. This is evidenced by the inclusion of consumer advocates at both the peer and programmatic review levels. The consumer perspective helps the scientists understand how the research will affect the community, and allows for funding decisions based on the concerns and needs of patients and the medical community.

The DOD BCRP not only provides a funding mechanism for high-risk, high-return research, but also reports the results of this research to the American people at a public meeting called the "Era of Hope," which began in 1997. The transparency of the BCRP allows scientists, consumers and the American public to see the exceptional progress made in breast cancer research. The Era of Hope meeting has occurred every 2 to 3 three years, since that first 1997 meeting. The most recent Era of Hope was in 2005 where all BCRP award recipients reported their research findings and many awardees from previous years were asked to present advancements in their research. Themes for the 2005 meeting included: *Understanding Risk - A Different Perspective; Understanding Who Needs Intervention and Understanding Treatments - Effectively Treating Primary and Metastatic Disease.* The meeting also featured grant recipients who have delved into the topic of breast cancer heterogeneity. For example, gene expression profiling technologies have allowed researchers to identify several breast cancer "types." Recognition of the heterogeneous character of breast cancer will allow for better selection of patient subgroups for clinical trials testing targeted therapies.

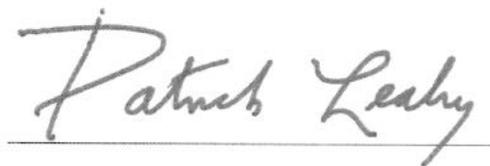
The Institute of Medicine, in an analysis of the program, overwhelmingly supports the BCRP's continuation stating, "the program fills a unique niche among public and private funding sources for cancer research. It is not duplicative of other programs and is a promising vehicle for forging new ideas and scientific breakthroughs in the nation's fight against breast cancer."

There continue to be millions of American women living with breast cancer, as well as their friends and families, who hope that a means of preventing, curing, and better treating this disease will soon be found. To help further the search for answers, we ask that you fund the DOD Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program at **\$150 million for FY 2007.**

Sincerely,



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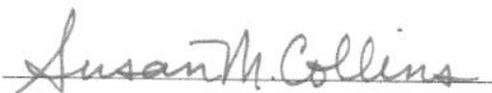
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