

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 – US Capitol
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum, Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
H-405 – US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs DeLauro and McCollum and Ranking Members Granger and Calvert:

As you develop the FY 2022 Defense Appropriations Act, the 30 undersigned organizations urge the Defense Subcommittee to include a new bladder cancer research program funded at \$10 million within the Department of Defense's (DOD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) to support the fight against this lethal cancer.

Creating a bladder cancer line item will increase the overall awareness of the disease while advancing needed research. With \$10 million in funding, researchers could develop more effective and less costly therapies, better understand environmental factors contributing to bladder cancer to enable increased prevention and improve survivor quality of life.

The Impact of Bladder Cancer in the United States

Bladder cancer is the sixth most diagnosed cancer in the United States. This year, more than 83,700 people in America, or over 230 citizens per day, will be diagnosed with bladder cancer while over 17,200 Americans will lose their lives to this dreadful disease. The burden of this disease is further amplified by race disparities in the black population, in which the five-year survival rate for bladder cancer is only 64%, as compared to 77% in the white population. Today, more than 600,000 families are living with bladder cancer which is known to be one of the most expensive cancers to treat on a per patient basis due to recurrence rates of 50-80%. Yet, the five-year survival rate for bladder cancer, in the entire American population, has decreased by two percent, from 1987 to 2016. Despite these figures, the amount of federal funding for bladder cancer research is disproportionately low given its burden.

The Impact of Bladder Cancer in the U.S. Military Population

As noted above, bladder cancer is the sixth most diagnosed cancer in America; however, it is the fourth most diagnosed cancer in our veteran community. Just last year, in the National Defense Authorization Act, Congress recognized the devastating effect bladder cancer has had on our veteran community. Congress directed bladder cancer be included on the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) list of service-connected presumptive diseases linked to agent orange, which grants veterans access to additional VA disability benefits they are entitled to.

As Congress and the VA recognized last year, this cancer gravely affects the men and women who currently serve, or have served, our country in uniform. As the occupational exposure risks our service members face are better understood, more research on bladder cancer is necessary to improve treatment and save lives. CDMRP-funded research may also result in considerable savings for both TRICARE and the Veterans Health Administration. Bladder cancer is associated with high costs due to the need for long-term treatments, as there are frequent recurrences, especially in patients with early-stage bladder cancer.

Our nation's past and present service members will directly benefit from the high risk, high reward research that only the CDMRP supports. This is especially true for women, who are less likely to be diagnosed early but are more likely to suffer from advanced forms of this disease. It has taken 30 years for a single major advancement to be made in bladder cancer treatment, and a strong and long overdue commitment of federal research funding is needed to build on that progress and finally find a cure.

Opportunity for Rapid Impact on Bladder Cancer Research

In recent years, there has been exciting progress made towards earlier diagnosis that correlates with improved bladder cancer outcomes. The progress can be attributed to federal funding investment within the CDMRP. Further, what makes the CDMRP funding essential is its hallmark of targeting critical gaps in research by funding "high impact, high risk and high gain projects that other agencies may not venture to fund." With your continued support, you provide great hope to bladder cancer patients and their families by effectively targeting this disease through research. Moreover, based on the exceptionally high number of life-changing research projects submitted to the CDMRP during FY 2016 – FY 2019, the bladder cancer research community is poised to invest these funds wisely and with maximal impact towards savings lives and American productivity.

To meet these research needs, we join with bladder cancer patients, advocates, and others in requesting that **bladder cancer have a dedicated \$10 million line item in the CDMRP for FY 2022**. We strongly believe that this action will have a positive impact on Americans' health. Please consider dedicating a \$10 million line item in FY 2022 for bladder cancer within the CDMRP.

Sincerely,

American Urological Association
Answer Cancer Foundation d/b/a AnCan
Arizona Urological Society
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Boston University / Boston Medical Center
California Urological Association
Cancer and Careers
Caregiver Action Network
Cedars Sinai Academic Urology Practice
Chris "CJ" Johnson Foundation Inc.
Crush It For Curtis Foundation
Franktalk.org
George Washington University
Johns Hopkins
Kure It Cancer Research
Live UTI Free Ltd
Malecare
National Association For Continence
Patient Empowerment Network
Prostate Cancer International
RetireSafe
Sexual Medicine Society of North America
Simon Foundation for Continence

Society of Government Service Urologists
Society of Women in Urology
Triage Cancer
University of Illinois at Chicago
University Urology
Urological Association of Physician Assistants
Us TOO International
(as of 3pm 3/29/2021)