

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

As you begin work on the fiscal year (FY) 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide funding for childhood cancer research, surveillance, and educational programs. These initiatives are consistent with the goals of the 2008 Caroline Pryce Walker Conquer Childhood Cancer Act (P.L. 110-285).

Every year, 15,000 children in America are diagnosed with cancer, and incidence rates are rising. Despite enhanced cure rates for some pediatric malignancies, cancer claims the lives of more than 2,000 children annually and remains the leading cause of disease-related death in children. Children who survive face devastating long-term physical, mental, and emotional complications.

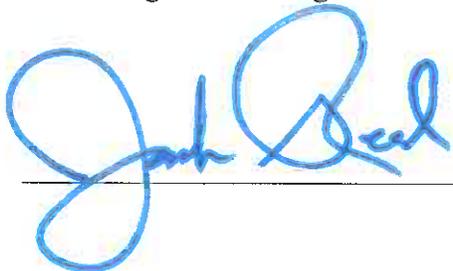
Improved treatment options and a hope of finding a cure lies in biomedical research. However, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) consistently spends less than five percent of its annual budget on childhood cancer research. Even NCI acknowledges publicly on its website that more could be done stating, “[w]hile improvements in survival for childhood cancers have been observed over the last several decades, the initial fast pace of these improvements has slowed suggesting that we have reached a plateau in our ability to achieve better outcomes for patients.” We urge the Committee to address this urgent need with additional research funding and by placing greater emphasis on the development of methods for improving the number of childhood cancer research initiatives funded by NCI.

Better understanding of the disease patterns also has the potential to improve health outcomes. As such, we are pleased that the Committee provided the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with \$3 million in FY10 and FY11 to enable researchers to rapidly report childhood cancer occurrences, reoccurrences, and effective treatment options. We encourage you to build upon this important investment in FY12.

Finally, in order to help patients and families understand the effects of childhood cancer and cope with the disease, we request that funding continue to be made available for educational and outreach services relating to the disease. Without adequate information and support families are often unable to access appropriate treatments and navigate the health care system.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you toward the goal of ending the devastation of pediatric cancer for all children.

Sincerely,



Stephane

Chris Sch

Rebecca Stetson

Ron Wyden

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Jeanne Shaheen

Frank R. Lautenberg

Bob Sanders

Patrick Leahy

Kay R. Hagan