

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

We write to request the funding levels for the Peer-Reviewed Prostate Cancer Research Program (PCRP) are maintained when the Committee marks up the FY2012 Defense Appropriations bill later this year.

This year, over 217,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and over 32,000 men will die from the disease. Prostate cancer is the most diagnosed non-skin cancer in the United States and the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men. Health experts have noted an increase of prostate cancer among the nation's veterans who were exposed to defoliants. Another recent study found that active duty personnel are two times more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer as civilian men.

Since 1996, the Committee has been instrumental in advancing prostate cancer research by funding the DOD Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program which includes the PCRP. The DOD has a long history of conducting excellent medical research and a demonstrated ability to rapidly adjust to changing needs and priorities. The PCRP is the gold standard in research and an integral weapon in the national fight against prostate cancer.

Federal funding for prostate cancer research has accounted for, on average, only 5 percent of the nation's annual cancer research budget while prostate cancer is responsible for about 15 percent of all cancer cases and about 15 percent of cancer deaths in men. Because the PCRP funds high risk, high reward research, the funding can leverage further research at the NIH and accelerate research through the clinical trial process. PCRP funding provided for the Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium (PCCTC) has allowed several drugs to navigate through clinical trials more quickly, including Zytiga which was approved by the FDA in April of 2011.

Research funded by the PCRP advances treatments and procedures that effectively protect and treat our war fighters who are at an increased risk of developing prostate cancer as they are faced with increased threats from chemical warfare such as Agent Orange in Vietnam and other unknown chemicals that have emerged since the Desert Storm operations in Iraq as well as exposure to depleted uranium used in munitions since 1991 and used in classified testing facilities since the 1970s.

More research is needed in the areas of early detection and improved diagnosis. Controversy still surrounds current methods of early detection and diagnosis. Without a program like the PCRP that has the flexibility to identify and address immediate unmet needs, researchers, doctors and patient advocates will continue to struggle to educate men about the importance of screening and early detection.

Please join us in making prostate cancer research, awareness and early detection a national health care priority by ensuring that adequate resources are available for the DOD PCRP. We recognize the difficult task ahead of your subcommittee in setting priorities among the many needs of our nation, but we sincerely appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Billie Steinar

Barbara Mikulski

Frank R. Lautenberg

Ben Cardin

John F. Kerry

Herb Kohl

Barack Sanders

Jack Reed