

Support FY2020 DoD Peer Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) Appropriations

*****This is a Programmatic Request that will require online submission. No financial disclosures are required.*****

Deadline: Tuesday, March 26 at COB

Dear Colleague:

In 2018, it is estimated that 266,120 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among U.S. women and approximately 2,470 new cases among U.S. men and more than 40,000 will die of the disease this year. In addition to invasive cancers, 63,960 new cases of in situ breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in the U.S. in 2018. Despite tremendous effort to combat this terrible disease, we still have significant work to do in learning how to prevent, treat, and cure breast cancer. While we do not have the answers, we know the worldwide research community is making progress and are confident that, with the right investments and structure, we can bring an end to breast cancer. The Department of Defense peer-reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (DOD BCRP) is a critical tool in this effort.

Since its inception, the DOD BCRP has established itself as an innovative, competitive and accountable medical research program. The groundbreaking science preformed through the program is changing the face of biomedical research.

The DOD BCRP is innovative not only because of the unique research that is performed, but also because it is so efficient and flexible. Over 90% of the funds go directly to research grants, awarded only to the best projects through a competitive process. The program is able to quickly respond to current scientific advances and fill gaps by focusing on research that is traditionally underfunded. 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 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.

In an analysis of the DOD BCRP, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) commends the program and states: “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.”

Last year, 182 U.S. Representatives supported our bipartisan effort to increase funding for this worthy program. This year, we again ask that you sign the letter to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in support of funding the Program at \$150 million for FY2020.

The deadline to sign the letter is Tuesday, March 26, 2019.

Please contact Katrina Martell (Katrina.Martell@mail.house.gov, Ext. 5-1313) in Congressman Hastings’ office or Deena Tauster (Deena.Tauster@mail.house.gov, Ext. 5-7896) in Congressman King’s office with any questions.

Sincerely,

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

James P. “Jim” McGovern
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

In 2018, it is estimated that 266,120 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among U.S. women and approximately 2,470 new cases among U.S. men and more than 40,000 will die of the disease this year. In addition to invasive cancers, 63,960 new cases of in situ breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in the U.S. in 2018. While we have made some progress in prevention efforts, more accurate diagnosis and better treatments, much work remains to be done to end breast cancer once and for all. As a nation, we must continue to show a commitment to changing these statistics.

Fortunately, thanks to your leadership and support, as well as that of the Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriations Subcommittee and the entire Appropriations Committee, the DOD peer-reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) has led the way in the fight against breast cancer since it began in 1992. Now, the DOD BCRP offers true promise in finding the answers necessary to end breast cancer for good. **In order to continue its progress towards this goal, we urge you to include robust funding for the DOD BCRP in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill for fiscal year (FY) 2020.**

As you both are aware, the DOD BCRP has established itself across the nation and around the world as a model medical research program. Some of the keys to the DOD peer-reviewed BCRP's success are:

- **It is innovative and unique.** The DOD BCRP has a unique grants structure that allows it to be more flexible than other traditional competitive, peer-reviewed medical research programs. Due to this structure, it is able to fund innovative, high-risk, high-return research and quickly respond to current scientific advances. In addition, the DOD peer-reviewed BCRP is able to fill gaps by focusing on areas of research that are promising but otherwise underfunded. In its reviews of the DOD BCRP, the Institute of Medicine has stated, "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."
- **It addresses specific needs.** The DOD BCRP directs research to address specific health concerns that are a priority and identifies the specific research areas where funding is to be allocated.
- **It is efficient.** Approximately 90 percent of the appropriated funding goes directly to competitive, peer-reviewed research grants awarded to the best science.
- **It is accountable to the public and transparent.** Educated, trained consumer advocates participate in a two-tiered process where research proposals are reviewed first for scientific quality, and then for programmatic relevance. This consumer involvement allows for grant funding decisions to be based on the real-life experiences, concerns and needs of both the patient and medical communities. Once funded by the DOD BCRP,

each researcher must present their results online on the program's website and at public meetings called "Era of Hope." This transparency allows scientists, consumers and the public to view the progress made in breast cancer research through the DOD BCRP.

- **It has produced extraordinary results.** The DOD BCRP has made significant scientific breakthroughs that have contributed to our understanding and treatment of breast cancer. For example, the drug trastuzumab (Herceptin) – developed as a result of research funded through the DOD BCRP – is prolonging the lives of women with a particularly aggressive type of advanced breast cancer that was previously untreatable.
- **It benefits all.** As the first of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRPs), the DOD BCRP strives to uphold the vision of the CDMRPs “to find and fund the best research to eradicate diseases and support the war fighter for the benefit of the American public.” It does so by directly supporting the over 400,000 women currently serving on active duty and in the Reserves and National Guard, their male counterparts, and their families, as well as the millions living with breast cancer across the nation and around the world.

The DOD BCRP has proven itself a powerful weapon in the fight against breast cancer and continues to bring us closer to finding the answers necessary to end breast cancer once and for all. On behalf of the millions of Americans living with breast cancer, their families, and friends, **we ask you to continue your support for and investment in the DOD peer-reviewed BCRP and include robust funding in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill for FY2020.**

Sincerely,

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Member of Congress