

March XX, 2018

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 literally changing the face of biomedical research.

The DOD BCRP is innovative not only because of the unique research that is preformed, 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 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 prospective 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 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.” This year, we again ask that you sign the bipartisan letter to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in support of funding the Program at \$150 million for FY2019.

Last year’s signers were Booker, Stabenow, Whitehouse, Leahy, Baldwin, Murphy, Whitehouse, Blumenthal, Baldwin, Brown, Warren, Feinstein, Peters, Merkley, Stabenow, Coons, Duckwoth, Booker, Markey ,Reed, Klobuchar, Wyden, Shaheen, Van Hollen, Collins, Cortez Masto

The deadline to sign the letter is March 29th. If you would like to join us in this fight, please email:

Francesca Longo (Gillibrand) at Francesca_Longo@gillibrand.senate.gov

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The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Durbin:

The Department of Defense peer-reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (DOD BCRP) has established itself as a model medical research program. The DOD BCRP's progress in the fight against breast cancer has been made possible by this Committee's investment in breast cancer research. **We thank you for your past support, and ask that you provide funding \$150 million for fiscal year (FY) 2019 for the DOD BCRP in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill.** The critical work of this program must be continued at this level of funding because:

- **It is a demonstrated success:** Ground-breaking discoveries that offer insights into the biology of breast cancer have come as a result of the program, including revolutionary work that led to the development of the innovative drug Herceptin. From new methods of extracting breast cancer cells at their earliest stages, to unprecedented research into gene/environment interaction and quality of life issues, the DOD BCRP leads the way in generating new approaches to breast cancer prevention, treatment, and detection. The Institute of Medicine, in two analyses of the program, overwhelmingly supports continued investment in the DOD BCRP, 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."
- **It is innovative and unique:** The DOD BCRP has a unique grants structure that allows it to be more flexible and to fund innovative, high-risk, high-return research, enabling it to quickly respond to current scientific advances and to fill gaps by focusing on areas of research that are promising but otherwise underfunded.
- **It is efficient:** Approximately 90 percent of the appropriated funds go directly to competitive, peer-reviewed research grants awarded only on the basis of scientific merit.
- **It is transparent and accountable 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 breast cancer community and allows for funding decisions based on the concerns and needs of patients

and the medical community. Each researcher who receives funds from the program must present their results to the American people online and at public meetings called “Era of Hope.” The transparency of the DOD BCRP allows scientists, consumers, and the American public to see the exceptional progress made in breast cancer research.

While the prevention and cure of breast cancer is not yet within our grasp, with the proper investments, we can win the fight against breast cancer. 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. Notably, research has also shown that breast cancer rates among female service members are significantly higher than in the general civilian population. Despite tremendous efforts to combat this terrible disease, we still have work to do to learn how to prevent, treat, and cure breast cancer. The DOD BCRP is a critical tool in this effort.

The Appropriations Committee has shown great determination and leadership in the search for answers in continuing to fund the DOD BCRP and by continuing to maintain the integrity of this model program of research. **We thank you for your longstanding leadership with respect to the DOD BCRP and ask that you provide funding of \$150 million for fiscal year (FY) 2019 for the DOD BCRP in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill.**

Sincerely,