March 23, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Cochran and Blunt and Ranking Members Leahy and Murray:

As members of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC), a coalition of public interest groups representing millions of cancer researchers, patients, survivors and their families, we are writing to you in response to the release of President Trump's FY18 Budget Proposal specifically regarding the proposed cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and ultimately the National Cancer Institute (NCI) which would be a devastating blow to the cancer research community, doctors, nurses, patients and their families. We ask that you reject these proposed cuts and include an increase for the NIH both in a final FY 2017 appropriations bill and the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

**National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute**

As a community, we strongly oppose the Administration's $5.8 billion cut to the NIH. This cut would most likely lead to a $1billion cut in NCI funding making it the largest funding reduction in its history and set funding levels back nearly 20 years. The NIH and NCI are on the forefront in regards to research and innovation towards accelerating progress in preventing, diagnosing, and treating cancers. The proposed cuts would be extremely detrimental to the continuation of this work and to the lives of millions of Americans who have or will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetimes.

The more than 200 diseases that we call "cancer" take a tremendous toll on our nation. It is estimated that almost 1.7 million people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with cancer this year. More than 600,000 Americans will die from the disease in 2017, which translates to more than 1,640 people a day. Annual cancer incidence rates are also projected to increase by 31 percent over the next decade, growing to 2.1 million people diagnosed in 2025. Recent estimates also show that

cancer costs the U.S. economy more than $216 billion annually in direct treatment costs and lost productivity, a number that will increase dramatically as incidence rates climb.

Less than 6 months ago, OVAC was pleased to see the bipartisan effort to pass the 21st Century Cures Act with the inclusion of funding for the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot. We are aware and grateful for the support of our Congressional leadership in regards to the importance of medical research and innovation especially within the sphere of cancer research funding. We ask you to recognize that the cuts included in the Administration's FY18 budget would void the progress that the 114th Congress sought to facilitate with the acknowledgement of the under-funded and world class research that has been stewarded by the doctors and scientists at the NIH.

**Cancer Prevention and Early Detection – Putting Research Advances into Practice**

The members of OVAC strongly urge Congress to reject any proposed cuts to the CDC cancer programs, and also requests that you support state-based cancer prevention and control programs by providing the CDC cancer programs with $514 million in FY 2018.

About half of the 600,000 deaths that will occur from cancer this year could be averted through prevention: by eliminating tobacco use, encouraging better diet and exercise, and giving all Americans access to cancer screening and preventive medicine. The CDC cancer prevention and control programs provide vital resources to every state for cancer monitoring and surveillance, screening programs, state cancer control planning and implementation, and awareness initiatives targeting breast, skin, prostate, colon, ovarian, and blood cancers.

Adequate funding for the CDC cancer programs in FY 2018 will ensure that a half-million women are screened for breast and cervical cancer, allow tens of thousands of men and women to have access to colorectal screening, enable proper monitoring of state- and local-based cancer patterns and trends, and provide greater support for state and local awareness and education programs. It is also imperative that the CDC have sufficient resources to address the unique needs of the growing population of survivors who are living with, through and beyond a cancer diagnosis. We know that even after treatment ends, the cancer journey does not, and many survivors face long-term emotional, physical and financial side effects.

Additionally, state health departments have been unable to fully implement cancer control strategies as a result of inadequate funding. States have been forced to scale back on prevention programs and reduce the number of screenings they provide as funding for CDC cancer programs has not kept up with their needs.

**Oncology Nursing – Caring for Patients and Conducting Research**

Lastly, OVAC is dismayed by the Administration's proposed elimination of $403 million towards health professions and nursing training programs. Oncology nurses are on the front lines when it comes to providing quality cancer care, and contribute significantly to cancer research. There is also a well-documented nursing shortage. Funding for the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) nurse training programs is essential to combatting this workforce shortage. More funding for HRSA's nurse training programs is necessary to ensure enough resources to fund

a higher rate of nursing scholarships and loan repayment applications and to support other vital efforts to address the current and future nursing workforce shortage.

For all of these reasons, we ask that you ensure that the fight against cancer remains a top national priority and reject the funding cuts proposed by the Administrations FY18 budget blueprint. These cuts would be devastating to the progress of cancer research and innovation and affect countless Americans and their families by stymieing the advancement of possible cures or therapies that are so needed by those suffering from cancers.

The members of OVAC thank you for your consideration of this request and stand ready to support your efforts to promote research funding.

Sincerely,

Action to Cure Kidney Cancer
Alliance for Prostate Cancer Prevention (APCaP)
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association for Cancer Research
American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer
American Sexual Health Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO)
American Urological Association
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Cancer Support Community
Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research
Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Esophageal Cancer Action Network
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Friends of Cancer Research
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association
Intercultural Cancer Council Caucus
LIVE**STRONG** Foundation
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS)
Lung Cancer Alliance
Men's Health Network
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions (NASPCC)
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
National Brain Tumor Society
National Cancer Registrars Association

National Coalition for Cancer Research (NCCR
National Patient Advocate Foundation
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Prostate Conditions Education Council
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
Susan G. Komen
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
ZERO – The End of Prostate Cancer