

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

This year, over 174,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, and it is estimated that more than 31,000 men will die from this disease. As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Defense Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that the Committee appropriate \$110 million to the Department of Defense's (DOD's) Prostate Cancer Research Program (PCRP).

After more than two decades of falling, prostate cancer deaths are now on the rise. When caught early, prostate cancer has a nearly one hundred percent five year survival rate. When it has metastasized the survival rate drops to 30 percent. It is estimated that 2,000 more men will die this year than in 2018 of prostate cancer. And that number reflects an increase of 5,000 more deaths when compared to 2017. Now more than ever we need research to better treat and diagnose prostate cancer.

Since 1996, the Committee has been instrumental in advancing prostate cancer research by funding the DOD's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) for prostate cancer. Its administrative structure has demonstrated an ability to be flexible and quickly adjust responses to changing medical research needs and priorities. The PCRP, which compliments larger NIH basic science efforts, is the gold standard in prostate cancer research and an integral weapon in the national fight against prostate cancer.

Unlike the NIH, PCRP has clear priorities each year that target gaps in prostate cancer diagnostics, care, and treatment with an emphasis on meeting the needs of the prostate cancer community. The programmatic review of all proposals ensures that the government is not spending scarce dollars on duplicative research. This structure works. In the last eight years, the PCRP has produced three new treatments for metastatic prostate cancer and one new advanced diagnostic.

Not only is the PCRCP effective, it is military relevant. Prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among veteran men and active duty men have an incidence rate that is twice that of the general population. Between 2005 and 2014, prostate cancer accounted for 11.7 percent of cancer diagnoses in active duty men. In addition, it is well known that cancer diagnoses among service members or their families have a negative impact on psychological health and military readiness.

For these reasons, we request a FY2020 appropriation of \$110 million for the PCRCP within the CDMRP, which reflects a \$10 million increase over the FY2019 level. Researchers will use this funding to: develop treatments that improve outcomes for men with lethal prostate cancer; reduce lethal prostate cancer in African Americans, Veterans, and other high-risk populations; define the biology of lethal prostate cancer to reduce death; and, improve the quality of life for survivors of prostate cancer.

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 PCRCP. We recognize the difficult task ahead of your subcommittee in setting priorities among the many needs of our nation, but we appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Stanford D. Bishop Jr.

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