

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March XX, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin,  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran & Ranking Member Durbin:

We respectfully request your support to provide \$15 million within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) in the Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriations bill to fund kidney cancer research.

We would also like to thank you for adding kidney cancer to the DOD Peer Reviewed Medical Research and Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Programs, which, since 2006, have resulted in research grants valued at \$7.5 million, providing significant research for this cancer. For example, a grant was recently awarded to design and demonstrate a simple and inexpensive urine test to be performed in a physician's office for the detection of kidney cancer at a very early stage. Unfortunately, while this research represents important progress, there have been far more applications for the research program than funding available. We very much appreciate the Committee's past support and believe an investment through CDMRP would make a tremendous difference to many Americans, including our military veterans.

Kidney cancer has the ninth highest rate of incidence among cancers overall, however, it is the fourth leading cancer among both African American males and Hispanic males. According to a CDMRP study the incidence of kidney cancer specifically for military members after the 4<sup>th</sup> decade of life dramatically increases from an average of 1.5 to 8.5 cases per 100,000 person-years. In addition, renal cancer occurs almost twofold more frequently in males than in females and approximately 80% of military personnel are males. Given this disease burden in the U.S. veteran population, we believe it is appropriate to have the Department of Defense provide research funding necessary to develop innovative treatment options to combat this deadly disease.

Mortality rates for kidney cancer patients are disturbingly high due to the absence of screening techniques to provide early diagnosis, coupled with the limited treatments that are currently available. For example, there is only one FDA-approved drug for metastatic kidney cancer that has shown any durable response, and this only applies to 6 percent of patients. In recent years, targeted therapies initially developed for metastatic kidney cancer have gone on to be tested in other cancers. For example, one drug first tested and approved by the FDA for kidney cancer has been in clinical trials for 27 other cancers. Therefore, an investment in kidney cancer research could result in benefits for many

other cancers as well. However, unlike other types of cancer, no therapy currently exists to prevent future recurrence of kidney cancer once patients are in remission.

The National Cancer Institute estimates that \$3.8 billion is spent in the United States each year on treatment of kidney cancer. This devastating illness deserves the federal research funding supported by the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. We respectfully request that you provide \$15 million within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) in the Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriations bill to fund kidney cancer research.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,