



November 10, 2014

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have been impacted by pancreatic cancer, I am writing to you today to ask that you pass, as soon as possible, an omnibus appropriations bill that restores funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – particularly the National Cancer Institute (NCI) – to at least pre-sequestration levels. I am also asking that you support the continued inclusion of pancreatic cancer in the Department of Defense's (DoD's) Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). In addition, I urge you to support **World Pancreatic Cancer Day** this **Thursday, November 13**, by wearing something purple on that day.

Pancreatic cancer is the only major cancer that still has a five-year relative survival rate in the single digits – at just 6 percent – and there are no early detection tools or effective treatments. That is in stark contrast to the overall survival rate for cancer, which is now 67 percent. Even more alarming, pancreatic cancer is now estimated to become the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States by 2020. Both the NCI and DoD's PRCRP play a vital role in changing these terrifying statistics.

Throughout November, and beyond, the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network will **Wage Hope** in the fight against pancreatic cancer, but we need your help. Sustained, predictable, real growth in federal support for medical research funded by NCI is essential to making real and continued progress in the fight against pancreatic cancer. However, with the NIH budget failing to keep up with medical inflation for the past decade, while other countries are increasing their investments in biomedical research, the United States is facing an innovation deficit.

The NCI is the nation's key source of cancer research funding, and its share of the NIH budget has declined from 18.7 percent in the late 1990s to 16.4 percent today – which is a loss of \$680 million. While passage of the *Recalcitrant Cancer Research Act* in 2012 helped create a greater focus on pancreatic cancer and other deadly diseases, adequate funding for the NCI is essential to leveraging the promise of this new law.

Additionally, since 2009, the PRCRP has supported innovative and competitive cancer research to benefit our military and civilian populations. Pancreatic cancer research has been a part of PRCRP since fiscal year 2011, resulting in 16 grants, for a total of \$5.2 million, in fiscal years 2011 and 2012. This funding has been used to improve early detection of pancreatic cancer, to

better understand the prognosis of pancreatic cancer patients, and to improve the well-being of individuals with a pancreatic cancer diagnosis.

We respectfully request that by the end of the calendar year, you ensure the inclusion of the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill in an omnibus that prioritizes funding for the NCI, as well as a DoD appropriations bill that maintains pancreatic cancer as an area eligible for research funding in PRCRP. In addition, please join the thousands around the world who will be wearing purple on **Thursday, November 13**, and post your picture on social media with the hashtag #PurpleforaPurpose so that our nationwide network of advocates can count you as one of our supporters.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about pancreatic cancer or about Purple for a Purpose. Please feel free to contact me at mgdon@pancan.org or 202.742.6776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Gordon Don". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Gordon Don
Vice President, Government Affairs & Advocacy
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network