



Curing Stomach Cancer: How Congress Can Help

COMPLETE THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2022 SPENDING BILLS WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY AND PROVIDE:

- at least the House-passed \$6.56 billion for the National Cancer Institute; and
- the Senate's \$130 million for the Department of Defense's (DoD) Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP).

MAINTAIN STOMACH CANCER AS AN ELIGIBLE CANCER FOR RESEARCH FUNDING UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S PRCRP FOR FY 2023.

Service members, and oftentimes their families, are exposed to hazardous environments that put them at increased risk of certain cancers, including stomach cancer. The PRCRP was established in 2009 under the umbrella of the DoD's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs to support military relevant research into specifically designated cancers. Stomach cancer was first included in the PRCRP in FY 2015. It is vital stomach cancer remains in the PRCRP for FY 2023 and that the program's funding is increased.

The Department of Veterans Affairs considers stomach cancer to be a service connected malignancy.¹ Due to past and present deployments, U.S. Service members and Veterans may have an increased risk of developing stomach cancer, especially if diagnosed with *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*).^{2,3} This is significant because infection with *H. pylori* is a primary identified cause of stomach cancer.⁴

Maintaining stomach cancer's eligibility for research funding under the PRCRP for FY 2023 will make an enormous difference in understanding this under-researched cancer including the array of risk factors and causal mechanisms, particularly those related to military service.

To sign a letter to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense requesting stomach cancer's continued eligibility in the PRCRP contact: Katherine Close (Rep. Lois Frankel), Paul Laurie (Rep. Adam Kinzinger); or Chris Cryan (Sen. Mazie Hirono).

FUND THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE (NCI) AT \$7.766 BILLION FOR FY 2023.

Thanks to Congress' past support for the NCI, there has been a historic increase in high-quality cancer research proposal submissions. While NCI is funding more research, worthy research proposals get left on the table because there is not enough funding. The only way to end cancer as we know it is to increase NCI's budget. According to the NCI, increasing the payline by just one percent requires a federal investment of roughly \$300 million per year.

For stomach cancer and other recalcitrant cancers — defined as those with a five-year survival rate below 50 percent — increased cancer research funding improves the research environment and the possibility of new diagnostics, treatments, and prevention strategies.

This year, NCI launched the *Ad Hoc Working Group on Gastric and Esophageal Cancer*. In FY 2020, Congress took a critical step forward in the fight against stomach cancer by directing NCI to develop a "strategic plan" for research on gastric and esophageal cancer. NCI has made important progress in implementing that directive with the launching of this Working Group which will identify stomach cancer research needs and opportunities. Increased NCI funding is needed to bridge knowledge gaps of this historically under-researched cancer.

¹ National Cancer Strategy, Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, VHA Directive 2003-34. June 20, 2003.

² Program Booklet. Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program September 2019 <https://cdmrp.army.mil/prcrp/pbks/prcrppbk2019.pdf>

³ Taylor, DN et al. Second International Workshop on *Helicobacter pylori* Infections in the Developing World: *Helicobacter pylori* Infection in Desert Storm Troops. Clin Infect Dis. (1997) 25 (5): 979-982 doi:10.1086/516074

⁴ *Helicobacter pylori* and Cancer. National Cancer Institute. <http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/infectious-agents/h-pylori-fact-sheet>. Accessed online Dec. 23, 2015.