



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer Achieves Major Advocacy Accomplishment for Stomach Cancer Prevention

Language Requesting H. Pylori Testing Plan Included in Senate National Defense Authorization Act.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – August 2, 2024 – Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer (DDF) proudly announces a significant milestone in stomach cancer prevention advocacy. The Senate FY2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) approved by the Committee on Armed Services includes a provision requiring the Department of Defense to issue a report on a plan, cost estimate, and feasibility study for implementing *Helicobacter Pylori* (*H. pylori*) testing for certain members of the Armed Forces.

This achievement marks a critical step in reducing the risk of stomach cancer among military service members. *H. pylori* poses a substantial threat if undetected and untreated, leading to conditions such as stomach cancer, ulcers, and gastritis. Studies indicate that one-fourth of the U.S. veteran population is at risk for these chronic issues resulting from *H. pylori* infection. Early detection and eradication through testing can significantly reduce the risk of gastric cancer.

“Securing this language in the Senate NDAA is a monumental step in our advocacy efforts,” said Andrea Eidelman, Chief Executive Officer of DDF. “It reflects our unwavering commitment to preventing stomach cancer and ensuring the well-being of our service members and, eventually, civilians who are also affected by *H. pylori*. DDF calls on lawmakers to support retaining the *H. pylori* testing language as the legislation makes it way through Congress this year.”

DDF has advocated on Capitol Hill since 2013, working tirelessly to increase the federal budget for gastric cancer research through the Department of Defense's Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program. This year's efforts resulted in a powerful day on Capitol Hill with nearly 150 advocates, including Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Jonathan Porter, a stage 4 stomach cancer patient and active-duty military member whose story underscores the urgent need for standardized *H. pylori* screening and treatment protocols.

As DDF continues to champion the fight against stomach cancer, we are excited to announce the upcoming 13th Annual Capitol Hill Stomach Cancer Advocacy Day, scheduled for February 23-25, 2025, in Washington, DC. This event provides an opportunity for advocates to meet with legislators and further the cause of stomach cancer prevention and research. Registration details

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and more information can be found at www.DebbiesDream.org/advocacy.

About Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer

DDF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about gastric cancer, advancing research funding, and providing international education and support to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF's ultimate goal is to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality.

DDF was founded in 2009 by Debbie Zelman after she was diagnosed with stage IV incurable gastric cancer in 2008 and given only weeks to live. Debbie is considered a pioneer by many for bringing awareness to the plight of stomach cancer patients worldwide, as well as to the lack of federal funding for stomach cancer research. She did all of this while receiving hundreds of rounds of chemo and daily oral treatments. Debbie passed away on December 23, 2017, at 50, almost a decade later. As a result of her leadership, DDF now has a Scientific and Medical Advisory Board of world-renowned doctors and chapters throughout the United States, and in Canada and Germany. DDF strives to continue Debbie's mission to make her dream a reality. To learn more, visit www.DebbiesDream.org.



Photo: Debbie Zelman, the late founder of Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer, standing on the steps of Capitol Hill during the organization's 2014 Stomach Cancer Capitol Hill Advocacy Day.

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