

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Date

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
H-405, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you maintain inclusion of stomach cancer among those cancers eligible for research funding under the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP).

This year, it is estimated that roughly 30,300 Americans will learn they have stomach cancer and approximately 10,780 will die from the disease. Stomach cancer is a recalcitrant cancer, with an overall 5- year survival rate of 36 percent. At advanced stages, the five-year survival rate is just seven percent. The dismal statistics are largely because most patients present with advanced disease and tumor recurrence remains a significant challenge despite therapy. Despite marginal gains in stomach cancer survival rates over the past decade, incidence among young individuals, and particularly young women, continues to increase. Additionally, alarming inequalities in stomach cancer mortality persist.

The Department of Veterans Affairs considers stomach cancer to be a service-connected malignancy for service members who experienced hazardous exposures, including ionizing radiation and other toxins and burn pits. Further, U.S. military personnel who serve overseas have a higher encounter rate with the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) — a human carcinogen — which is a primary identified cause of stomach cancer.

PRCRP-supported projects are advancing the field of stomach cancer research, with the potential to make a tremendous difference in understanding this historically under-researched cancer. This includes research to understand the risk factors that contribute to stomach cancer and the disturbing upward trend in its incidence among young adults — a demographic that substantially overlaps with active-duty military personnel. For example, PRCRP researchers are working to better understand the process by which premalignant tumors turn into malignant tumors. Through this process, investigators may discover more effective ways to diagnose and treat premalignant tumors, preventing cancers from forming. PRCRP researchers are also close to bringing trial therapeutic agents that have the potential to suppress the growth of cancer tumors, offering a novel treatment for stomach cancer.

Funding for the PRCRP benefits military service members and their families and helps fulfill unmet clinical advances that can have a material impact on the lives of patients with stomach cancer. We respectfully request your support for maintaining stomach cancer's eligibility for research funding through the PRCRP for FY 2026 and for providing as much funding as possible for the program.

Sincerely,



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress
2nd District, South Carolina



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress
19th District, California