

## **The National Cancer Fund Act**

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition fully endorses The National Cancer Fund Act. Passage of this legislation is necessary to accelerate progress in the war against cancer and expand federally funded cancer research and control programs with the goal of:

- 1. Reducing cancer mortality to zero;**
- 2. Ensuring a high quality of life for cancer survivors; and**
- 3. Providing for palliative and end of life care.**

One and a half million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer this year. Cancer will claim the lives of more than 559,000 Americans, and will cost our nation \$206 billion in lost productivity, human capital, and increased direct medical costs. 'No other disease affects so many Americans – one out of every two men and one in every three women hear the words "you have cancer" during their lifetimes.

In 1971, President Nixon addressed the nation and said: *"I will...ask for an appropriation of an extra \$100 million to launch an intensive campaign to find a cure for cancer, and I will ask later for whatever additional funds can effectively be used. The time has come in America when the same kind of concentrated effort that split the atom and took man to the moon should be turned toward conquering this dreaded disease. Let us make a total national commitment to achieve this goal."*

That same year he signed the National Cancer Act into law.

This piece of legislation set up the framework to take cancer head on. Unfortunately, more than three decades later, the war rages on.

### **How cancer research is currently funded and where it is lacking:**

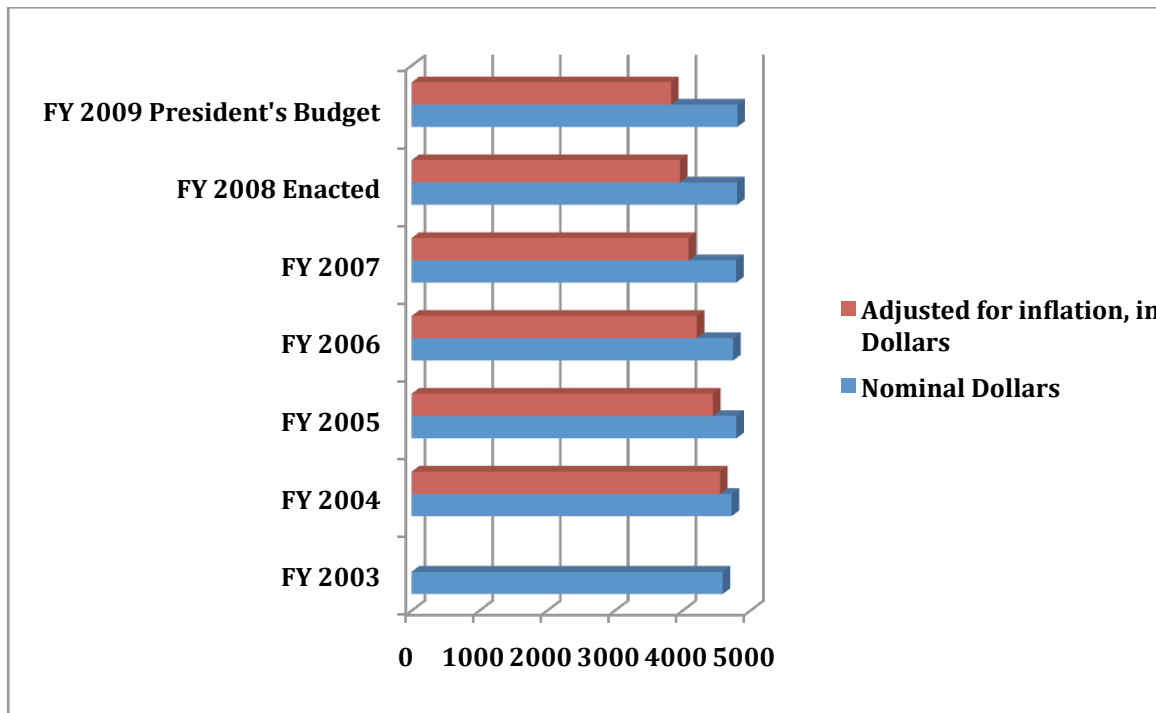
The Congress and the President appropriate funds to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for specific medical research; though, they do not tell NIH how to divide up the money between the institutes and centers.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is an institute at the NIH. The NIH allocates funds to NCI which are then distributed to specific programs, such as colorectal cancer research.

Funding trends over the past five years for cancer research and control are beginning to jeopardize the progress that has already been made. After

accounting for biomedical inflation, NCI's budget has decreased by more than 16.5 percent since FY 2003.

**NCI Appropriations FY 2003-2009 (in millions)<sup>ii</sup>**



Finally, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) state-based cancer programs provide vital resources for cancer monitoring and surveillance, breast and cervical cancer screening, state cancer control planning and implementation, and awareness initiatives targeting skin, prostate, colon, ovarian and blood cancers. A very small portion of the funds allocated to the CDC are used to increase colorectal cancer screening, education and outreach. For the past five years funding for the CDC has been stagnant at best.

**The National Cancer Fund Act will establish in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund for cancer research.**

While we are mindful of the fiscal challenges faced by the nation, the time has come to renew the federal commitment to fighting this disease.

The National Cancer Fund Act would provide a sustained, dedicated source of funding that would supplement existing appropriations for high impact cancer programs that will save lives.

Funding for the National Cancer Fund would come from Congressional appropriations. In addition, new funding would come from taxes generated by tobacco products. Raising the current tobacco tax to one dollar would generate \$7 billion per year in revenue, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Tobacco taxes are a logical choice for cancer funds, because 30% of cancer deaths are related to tobacco<sup>iii</sup>. Smoking increases risk of not only lung cancer, but also colorectal, pancreatic and gastric cancer, among others.<sup>iv</sup>

**The National Cancer Fund will benefit the war on cancer by:**

- Expanding access to healthcare for underserved and underinsured populations
- Conducting research to discover new prevention and early detection tools
- Expand colorectal cancer early detection and treatment programs to cover men and women who do not otherwise have access to health care
- Expand the breast and cervical cancer early detection program
- Increase the number of NIH research grants to support the next generation of researchers as they work to improve screening and treatment
- Increase access and reimbursement rates for federally sponsored clinical trials
- Implement a nationwide tobacco cessation program

**Conclusion: The National Cancer Fund Act will better equip our nation to wage its war against cancer.**

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition fully endorses The National Cancer Fund Act. This legislation will allow our nation to better assess how far we have come in this fight, while assuring the proper resources are available to further our progress.

This legislation will provide for funding in the area of colorectal cancer screening and treatment for the uninsured and underinsured in America.

It will help to speed the development of new therapies for those who are afflicted by this disease while also providing for research to ensure a high quality of life for survivors.

*C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition is a national, nonpartisan advocacy organization whose mission is to win the fight against colorectal cancer through research, empowerment and access.*

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<sup>i</sup> The American Cancer Society

<sup>ii</sup> One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC) – NCI Fact Sheet

<sup>iii</sup> American Cancer Society, Facts and Figures 2008

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid