

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2014

Dear Colleague:

This year, roughly 140,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and more than 50,000 will die from this disease. Colorectal cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer among active duty military personnel. We ask you to join us in requesting that colorectal cancer continue to be eligible in FY 2015 for research funding through the Department of Defense's (DoD) Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP).

The PRCRP falls under the umbrella of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRPs) within the DoD. Service members, and oftentimes their families, are exposed to hazardous environments that put them at increased risk of certain cancers, including colorectal cancer. The PRCRP was established in 2009 and supports military-relevant, peer-reviewed research into specifically designated cancers. Colorectal cancer has been eligible for research funding through the PRCRP since FY 2010 and has benefited from \$6.2 million in research funding to date.

The PRCRP, as well as other research programs under the CDMRP, concentrates resources on research that complements, rather than duplicates, the research approaches of the major funders of medical research in the United States. The PRCRP focuses on innovative research that uniquely meets the needs of military service members and their families, but also serves to benefit the broader American public. For example, exposure to ionizing radiation in the battlefield puts active duty military personnel at increased risk for certain types of cancer, including colorectal cancer. Ironically, ionizing radiation is also one of the primary treatment modalities for certain types of cancer. PRCRP research may tell us why individual genetic variations contribute to sensitivity or resistance to radiation. With a better understanding of an individual's cellular response to radiation, effective placement of military personnel based on their genetic signature can be implemented, as well as novel strategies to increase radiation efficacy in cancer patients can be developed.

Continued funding of colorectal cancer research through the PRCRP is important so new treatments can be discovered and new screening tests can be developed which can be easily administered to military service members in the field. If we can prevent colorectal cancer, we can avoid deaths from this preventable disease, as well as the associated costs of colorectal cancer to the Military Health System.

Please join us in supporting the continued inclusion of colorectal cancer as eligible for research funding under the PRCRP. For more information, or to sign onto this letter, please contact Tom Saunders with Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr. at (5-3436) or Thomas.Saunders@mail.house.gov or Molly McDonnell with Congressman Leonard Lance at (5-5361) or Molly.McDonnell@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.
Member of Congress



LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress

April X, 2014

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year 2015 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations bill, we respectfully ask that you maintain colorectal cancer as eligible for research funding under the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP).

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. This year, it is estimated that more than 140,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and more than 50,000 will die from this disease. Colorectal cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer among active duty military personnel. A 2002 study of the Military Health System found 355,422 military beneficiaries were identified to have a cancer diagnosis. Of the more than 60 different types of cancer diagnoses identified in this population, prostate, breast, lung and colorectal cancers accounted for more than 73 percent of all cancer diagnoses. Colorectal cancer is a malignancy that has been recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs as presumed to be service connected based on hazardous exposure to ionizing radiation.

A hallmark of the PRCRP is its focus on innovative research in cancers through the support of exceptionally talented, early-career researchers and clinicians who have the potential to advance the field of cancer research and deliver breakthroughs in the prevention, detection, and treatment of cancer. Colorectal cancer research has been funded through the PRCRP program since FY 2010. To date (FY 2010-FY 2012), the PRCRP has funded 14 colorectal cancer research grants for a total of \$6.2 million.

The PRCRP has funded ground breaking discoveries, including the identification of two new molecular targets which could lead to new treatments for patients with colorectal cancer. PRCRP has also supported research into a non-invasive genetic urine test for colorectal cancer, as well as research on genes associated with ionizing radiation sensitivity and resistance.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to include colorectal cancer as eligible for research funding under the PRCRP in FY 2015. Without the PRCRP, important colorectal cancer research that benefits military service members, their families, and the broader research and cancer communities is likely to go unfunded.

Sincerely,