

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

We greatly appreciate the inclusion of colorectal cancer as eligible for funding through the Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program within the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program in the Fiscal Year FY 2024 Defense appropriations bill. As you consider the House Department of Defense Appropriations bill for FY 2025, we respectfully request ***\$20 million to create a Colorectal Cancer Research Program within the Department of Defense (DoD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).***

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for men and women combined. While colorectal cancer incidence rates in individuals over 50 have largely stabilized or declined due to significant advancements in preventive screening, incidence rates have been increasing among individuals under 50 years of age - a key demographic for our active and reserve duty military personnel whose average age is 29.6 years.¹ According to data recently published by the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is now the number one cause of death for men under the age of 50 and the number two cause of cancer death for women under the age of 50.²

We don't know why this increase in colorectal cancer diagnoses in young people is happening. More research is critical to determine the cause and, ultimately, to develop interventions that can help address these trends.

¹ Total DoD Military Force. 2022 Demographics Dashboards. (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/chapter-1-total-force-characteristics>

² American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2024. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2024/2024-cancer-facts-and-figures-acf.pdf>

Individuals born in the 1990s have double the risk of colon cancer and quadruple the risk of rectal cancer as those born in the 1950s.³ Additionally, three of four colorectal cancer patients under the age of 50 have no family history of the disease, and over 60 percent are diagnosed at a late stage when the disease is far more difficult to treat. In those later stages, it becomes more expensive for patients and becomes an overwhelming financial burden on those patients and their families.⁴

Since FY 2010, colorectal cancer has been eligible for funding through the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). The PRCRP has supported research exploring issues important to both the warfighter and the civilian population, including whether environmental chemicals are associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer and whether drugs for other conditions can be used to treat colorectal cancer.

We are leaving good science on the table. In FY2022, the DoD received 66 colorectal cancer applications. Of those, 25 were deemed “meritorious,” but only nine applications were funded.

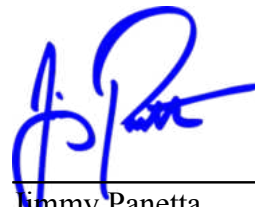
While we are making progress, greater investment is urgently needed. Colorectal cancer remains among the top five deadliest cancers, yet it stands as the lone cancer without its own research program within the CDMRP. All while it remains the number two cancer cause of death. It is time we applied the model that has been successful in other cancers, such as breast cancer and lung cancer, to colorectal cancer. We need a dedicated funding stream and strategic approach to innovate and deliver meaningful advancements in the fight against colorectal cancer.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,




Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

³ Siegel, Rebecca L. et al. "Colorectal Cancer Incidence Patterns In The United States, 1974–2013". JNCI: Journal Of The National Cancer Institute, vol 109, no. 8, 2017. Oxford University Press (OUP), doi:10.1093/jnci/djw322.

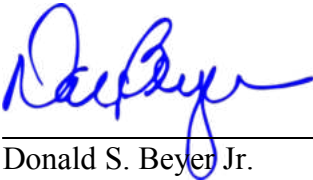
⁴ K Robin Yabroff, PhD, Angela Mariotto, PhD, Florence Tangka, PhD, Jingxuan Zhao, MPH, Farhad Islami, MD, PhD, Hyuna Sung, PhD, Recinda L Sherman, PhD, S Jane Henley, MSPH, Ahmedin Jemal, DVM, PhD, Elizabeth M Ward, PhD, Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, Part 2: Patient Economic Burden Associated With Cancer Care, JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute, Volume 113, Issue 12, December 2021, Pages 1670–1682, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djab192>



Sydney Kamlager Dove
Member of Congress



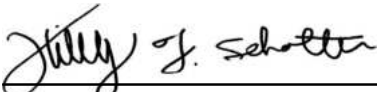
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



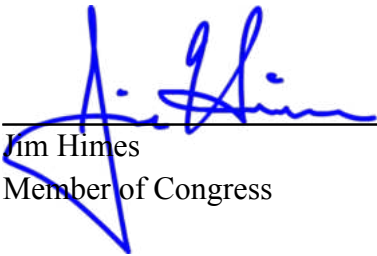
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Gabe Amo

Gabe Amo
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill

Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

Susan Wild

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Maxwell Frost

Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred

Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



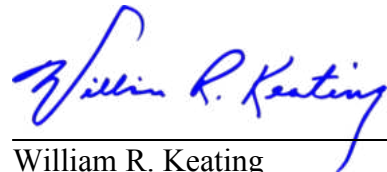
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



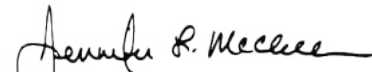
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



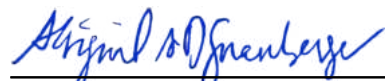
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress