

December 4, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee
H-405, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and Ranking Member Visclosky:

On behalf of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) and the nearly 1.3 million Americans living with a blood cancer diagnosis, I am writing to express our support for the inclusion of blood cancers as a research topic area for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program's Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP) at the Department of Defense. The PRCRP provides important resources for innovative blood cancer research to support service members, their families, and the American public.

Soldiers in the field face increased risks of developing blood cancers from exposure to chemical weapons, ionizing radiation, herbicides, and other chemical and nuclear exposures unique to active military service.¹ For example, higher incidences of leukemia, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma have long been substantiated in extreme nuclear incidents in both military and civilian populations. Additionally, studies have proven that individual exposure to chemical agents, such as Agent Orange in the Vietnam War, cause an increased risk of developing lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma, and myelodysplastic syndromes.² In response to these risks, Congress has funded targeted programs at the Department of Defense to support research in blood cancers and other cancers linked to military service.

Since its creation in FY09, the PRCRP has been the primary program supporting service-connected blood cancer research at the Department of Defense. From FY10-FY14, blood cancers was a prioritized topic area within the program. During that time, the PRCRP supported more than \$11 million in research grants to advance research in leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma. Unfortunately, the blood cancers topic area was removed from the program in FY15, but lymphoma was added back to the PRCRP as a priority topic area in FY16 and FY17.

The House Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for FY18 again included lymphoma as a topic area for the PRCRP, but the Senate Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for FY18 included myeloma as a topic area in place of lymphoma. While LLS supports the Committee's focus on expanding research in myeloma, we are concerned that this change would abruptly halt important lymphoma research conducted through the Department of Defense. To resolve the difference between the House and Senate bills, maintain resources for ongoing lymphoma research, and restore support for research in leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma at the Department of Defense, LLS respectfully urges the inclusion of blood cancers as a research topic area for the PRCRP in a final FY18 appropriations bill.

¹ Department of Defense. "Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program Fiscal Year 2014 Report to Congress." March 2014. Accessed at <http://cdmmp.army.mil/prcrp/reports/14prcReport.pdf>

² Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration. "National Cancer Strategy." June 20, 2003. Accessed at: https://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=261



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LLS appreciates your continued leadership on innovative biomedical research at the Department of Defense, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue. Please contact Sarah Milberg, Senior Manager of Federal Affairs, at sarah.milberg@lls.org or 202-969-1809 with any questions about the PRCRP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louis J. DeGennaro".

Louis J. DeGennaro, Ph.D.
President & CEO