

February 20, 2009

Peter R. Orszag, Ph.D.
Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Dr. Orszag:

As the Obama Administration develops its Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Advocacy Alliance requests that the administration include among its top priorities a commitment to end suffering and death from cancer.

The Komen Advocacy Alliance is the voice for over 2.5 million breast cancers survivors and the people who love them. Our mission is to translate the Komen promise to end breast cancer forever into government action to discover and deliver the cures. Susan G. Komen for the Cure is the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer in the world, investing more than \$1.3 billion since 1982 — and pledging another \$2 billion over the next decade.

We believe President Obama and his Administration share our primary public policy goal, a health system that ensures access to affordable, high-quality health care for all — including underserved populations and persons with chronic or pre-existing conditions like cancer. We urge the Administration to abide by its campaign commitments to discover and deliver cures for cancer and reflect this commitment in the FY2010 budget.

Discover the Cures: Increase our Investment in Science and Research

- **National Institutes of Health & National Cancer Institute:** We applaud the Administration and champions in Congress for dramatically boosting funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in the economic stimulus package. After six years of stagnant budgets, we are heartened to see a renewed commitment to the NIH and NCI. We and our partners in the One Voice Against Cancer coalition look forward to working with you to ensure that this temporary investment is matched by a long-term commitment to science and research. For example, the stimulus funds slated for the National Cancer Institute are well below what the agency says it needs to maintain current services and pursue cutting-edge cancer research opportunities. We encourage the Administration to ensure transparency in the funding process and commit additional resources to innovative early detection and translational research, as well as the development of public-private partnerships.
- **Translational Research:** Translational research is critically important in moving new discoveries and existing technologies to patients' bedsides, yet it is underemphasized in federal research investments. The FY2010 budget should fully enable the rapid implementation of the Translational Research Working Group report, "Transforming Translation – Harnessing Discovery for Patient and Public Benefit." Developed after years of collaborative effort by the brightest minds in science, academia, industry and the patient advocacy community, this critical report lays out a future course for NCI-supported translational research, patient care and cancer workforce development.
- **Food and Drug Administration:** The Komen Advocacy Alliance joins other organizations in the public health community in calling for \$2.25 billion for the FDA in FY2010. As the NCI increases its investment in translational research and in new and innovative products, the FDA will need additional resources to ensure these new technologies reach patients as quickly and safely as possible.



- **Department of Defense:** The Komen Advocacy Alliance applauds Congress for increasing the budget of the Department of Defense's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program for breast cancer to \$150 million for FY2009 (up from \$138 million in FY2008), which returns the program to its funding levels from FY2002 to FY2005. We also call on Congress to maintain this level of investment after FY2010.
- **Clinical Effectiveness:** The FY2010 budget should establish a comprehensive, transparent framework to guide investment of the \$1.1 billion appropriation for comparative effectiveness research included in the economic stimulus package. The goal should be to improve the quality of patient care by arming patients and their doctors with the best available information on effectiveness and safety of drugs, devices and diagnostic tests. In an era of personalized medicine, it is vital to understand which interventions work best for which patients so we can improve the quality and value of health care.
- **Health Information Technology:** The Komen Advocacy Alliance applauds the economic stimulus package's investment in electronic medical records, and urges the Administration to follow through with a sustained commitment to health information technology in the FY2010 budget. Electronic medical records will ultimately improve health care quality for cancer patients by preventing medical errors; helping patients keep track of extensive medical records; and improving coordination of care among a patient's primary care physician, oncologists, radiologists and other providers.

Deliver the Cures: Serving Underserved Populations

- **National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP):** The Komen Advocacy Alliance calls on Congress to provide \$250 million in FY2010 to narrow the funding gaps in the NBCCEDP, which provides breast cancer screening, outreach and case management services to underserved women. Current funding (about \$200 million) allows less than one in five eligible women to be screened. Even if the full requested level is achieved, there will still be large gaps — but at least it will allow thousands more women to receive potentially life-saving screening services.
- **Patient Navigation:** Congress should also appropriate \$18.6 million for the Patient Navigator program in FY2010, which includes funds that were authorized — but never appropriated — under the Patient Navigator, Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2005. The Patient Navigator Act established a competitive grant program through the Health Resources and Service Administration to provide patient navigation services to those in need.

Cancer costs the U.S. \$219 billion each year in medical costs and lost productivity, and inflicts incalculable physical pain and emotional distress on cancer patients and their families. An increased investment in the fight against cancer will provide the short-term stimulus the economy needs today, while building a foundation for a healthier more productive workforce in the future.

Sincerely,

Martina A. Hone
President
Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance