



**Association of  
American Cancer Institutes**

3708 Fifth Avenue  
Medical Arts Building, 503  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

412•647•6111

mail@aaci-cancer.org  
www.aaci-cancer.org

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May 28, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Pitts  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Pitts, and Ranking Member Green:

On behalf of the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI), an association of 94 leading cancer centers dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer, we would like to thank the House Energy and Commerce Committee for its unanimous approval on May 21 of H.R. 6, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act.

We appreciate that the Committee reached a bipartisan deal to include language to authorize \$1.5 billion per year in increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) over the next three years, and also language to provide an additional \$10 billion in mandatory funding through Fiscal Year 2020 through the NIH Innovation Fund. We are pleased that the NIH Innovation Fund will focus on biomarkers and precision medicine. Investing in precision medicine and precision drugs will improve public health and advance cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

AACI also applauds the inclusion of funding through the Cures Innovation Fund for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Predictable and sustained growth in FDA funding remains a priority for the cancer community and is essential to research and innovation. Hiring experienced FDA staff is central to the effective and efficient approval of breakthrough devices. The science of molecular testing is advancing rapidly; it is vital that regulators not stifle the innovation behind this progress.

AACI maintains that the time and effort that would be required of the NIH to fulfill a Strategic Plan would be costly, and that such a plan might also duplicate efforts. However, we are pleased to see that language was included to require the NIH director to report on plans to attract, retain, and develop emerging scientists. Scientists who are part of such groups are a key component of cancer research and discovery, yet many young people who represent the next generation of cancer researchers are pursuing other career options when they perceive no professional future in cancer research.

Lastly, AACI is encouraged by the creative solution offered to pay for the bipartisan legislation. The nation's cancer centers are steadfast in their efforts to reduce the burden of cancer for all Americans and, with enhanced and sustained support, we are making progress in helping the U.S. retain its lead in biomedical research. Unfortunately, the negative impact of flat or decreased funding on the NIH and the National Cancer Institute, coupled with sequestration, has limited our nation's ability to accelerate scientific progress in recent years.

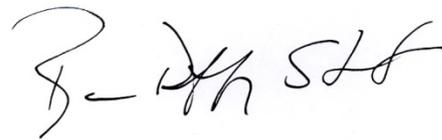
AACI congratulates the Committee on the passage of this bipartisan bill and expresses its sincere thanks for your tireless work to bring improvements to biomedical research. Restoring NIH's lost purchasing power and providing researchers with the funds needed to continue with research and expand discovery is vital to reducing the pain and suffering caused by cancer, as well as the economic future of our country.

Many thanks to you, your staff, and the Committee for your dedication to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures. We look forward to continuing to work with you toward a future without cancer.

Sincerely,



George J. Weiner, MD  
Director  
Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center  
University of Iowa



Barbara Duffy Stewart, MPH  
Executive Director  
Association of American Cancer Institutes

cc: House Energy and Commerce Committee Members