November 23, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, And Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, And Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, And Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, And Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear House and Senate Appropriations Leaders:

As the current President of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), which is the world’s first and largest scientific organization dedicated to the conquest of cancer, I join with former Presidents of the AACR to congratulate you on passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, and respectfully urge you to use a portion of the additional non-defense discretionary funding that has been made available as a result of this Act to provide the National Institutes of Health (NIH) with a $2 billion funding increase in FY 2016. This $2 billion funding increase would match the level that the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended for NIH as it
passed the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education subcommittee appropriations bill on June 25, 2015. Supporting such a robust increase for NIH would also demonstrate Congress’s commitment to making NIH funding a national priority, while also allowing the scientific community to build on our nation’s prior investments in medical research; ensure that our nation is able to respond to emerging health and research needs; boost local economies; and train the future generation of scientists.

The mission of the AACR is to prevent and cure cancer through research, education, communication, and collaboration. The membership of the AACR, which includes 35,000 basic, translational, and clinical researchers, other healthcare professionals, and patient advocates residing in the U.S. as well as 101 other countries around the world, is united in its dedication to accelerating progress in the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer.

We find ourselves in a time of unprecedented promise in medical research, and specifically cancer research. As chronicled in the AACR Cancer Progress Report 2015, we have made tremendous strides in our understanding of how to better prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat many forms of cancer. Thanks to NIH and National Cancer Institute (NCI) support of basic, translational, and clinical research, the five-year relative survival rate for all cancers combined has continued to increase – and today there are 14.5 million Americans living after having had a diagnosis of cancer. In addition to preserving the health of the American people, the vigorous pursuit of new breakthroughs in cancer research and biomedical science, including precision medicine, is one of our country’s primary paths to innovation, economic growth, and global competitiveness. Significant advances in our understanding of the genetic causes of cancer have opened the door to the development of new, precise treatments that are more effective and less toxic than conventional chemotherapies. We are now harnessing the power of the immune system to attack a patient’s own tumors, which is profoundly changing our approach to treating several types of cancers.

In spite of the progress that has been made, cancer remains a formidable foe, taking the life of one American every minute of every day. If our nation is going to improve the outlook for cancer patients, it will require Congress to make a multi-year investment in medical research by providing NIH and NCI with robust, sustained, and predictable annual budget increases.

Therefore, we urge you to seize the opportunity that has presented itself with the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act by ensuring that the NIH receives an FY 2016 appropriations increase of $2 billion. This level of increase will help us continue to transform cancer care, spur innovation and economic growth, and most importantly, bring hope to patients and their loved ones.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Alliance of AACR Presidents
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José Baselga, MD, PhD
Physician-in-Chief
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
New York, NY

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Director, Center for Cancer Targeted Therapies and Breast Cancer Program
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President 2013-2014
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Frank McCormick, PhD, FRS, DSc (hon.)
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Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
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Executive Director, Biodesign Institute
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