

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

[[DATE]]

The Honorable Jon Tester
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
122 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
122 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Collins:

In 2023, there will be an estimated 297,970 new cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed in women, 2,800 cases diagnosed in men, and an additional 55,720 cases of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) diagnosed in women. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States after lung cancer. It is estimated that this year, 43,250 women and 530 men will die of breast cancer. Female active-duty Service members have a 20-40% higher incidence rate of breast cancer than the general public. The incident rate of breast cancer for active-duty women is seven times higher than the average incident rate of fifteen other cancer types across all Service Members. While some progress has been made to end this disease, much work remains to be done. As a nation, we must continue to show a commitment to changing these statistics.

Fortunately, thanks to your leadership and support, as well as that of the DOD Subcommittee and the entire Appropriations Committee, the Department of Defense (DOD) Peer Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program has led the way in the fight against breast cancer since 1992. **To continue this progress moving forward, we ask that you support level funding for the program in FY2024.**

As you are aware, the DOD Peer Reviewed BCRP plays a leading role in the fight against breast cancer through its innovative approaches and its focus on research that will bring an end to the disease. The mission of the DOD BCRP is a world without breast cancer. The program's vision is to end breast cancer for Service Members, Veterans, and the all individuals by funding innovative, high- impact research through a partnership of scientists and consumers.

The BCRP challenges scientists to pursue high-risk, high-reward research, explore new paradigms that could lead to critical discoveries, and make an unprecedented impact on breast cancer. The BCRP also promotes synergistic collaborations across disciplines. The meaningful and unprecedented partnership of scientists and consumers that has been the foundation of this model

program from the very beginning. This unique collaboration is successful: every year, researchers submit proposals that reach the highest level asked for them by the program.

The DOD BCRP is a model medical research program, respected throughout the cancer and broader medical community for its innovative, transparent, and accountable approach. It is incredibly streamlined and efficient, which a flexibility that allows the Army to administer it with unparalleled effectiveness. The program's specific focus on breast cancer allows it to rapidly support innovative proposals that reflect the most recent discoveries in the field. It is responsive, not just to the scientific community, but also to the public. The revolutionary research performed through the program and the unique vision it maintains can benefit not just breast cancer but all cancers and other disease. The DOD BCRP has, and continues to, transform biomedical research.

We ask that you recognize the importance of what has been initiated by the Appropriations Committee. You have set in motion an innovative and highly efficient approach to the fight against breast cancer. Please continue your support for and investment in the DOD Peer Reviewed BCRP and include level funding in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill for FY2024. This is research that will help us win this very real and devastating war against a cruel disease

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