

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 12, 2026

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair McConnell and Ranking Member Coons:

As you begin to work on Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) appropriations, we ask that you continue supporting and investing in the Department of Defense Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (DOD BCRP) and include robust funding in the Defense appropriations bill.

In 2026, an estimated 321,910 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women, 2,670 cases diagnosed in men, and an additional 60,730 cases of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) will be 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, 42,670 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 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. As a nation, we must continue to commit to changing these statistics. The DOD BCRP is a critical tool in this effort by fighting breast cancer. Since its inception, the BCRP has established itself as an innovative, competitive, and accountable medical research program. The groundbreaking science performed through the program is changing the face of biomedical research.

The BCRP is streamlined and efficient, maximizing every dollar appropriated to find new treatments and cures. A recent GAO report found that the program “obligated nearly 100 percent of its CDMRP appropriations, prioritizes and assesses biomedical research investments through effective program and project management, and coordinates with NIH and VA for research program planning and project selection and leverages shared data to identify potential overlap.”¹

¹ https://cdmrp.health.mil/pubs/press/2022/CDMRP_GAO

The program can quickly respond to current scientific advances and fill gaps by focusing on traditionally underfunded research. It involves consumer advocates in all aspects of the process - both the peer review and programmatic review levels - which allows for funding decisions based on the concerns and needs of patients and the medical community. This funding is crucial to the continuation of groundbreaking research that can benefit not just breast cancer, but all cancers and many other diseases.

Please continue supporting and investing in the DOD Peer Reviewed BCRP and include robust funding in the Defense appropriations bill for FY27. This is research that will help us win this very real and devastating war against a cruel disease. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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