

Dear Chairman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky:

Since 2009, the Peer Review Cancer Research Program (PRCRP), part of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program administered by the Department of Defense, has supported innovative research in cancers, designated by Congress as relevant to those in military service and their families.

Childhood cancer affects families regardless of geographical location, occupation or income and affects military families without prejudice. Cancer is tragically the leading disease killer of in children, adolescents and young adults in the United States. It is now known that brain tumors are the primary cause of cancer death in children ages 0-19. Research has also shown that children have many different types of brain tumors, which are difficult to treat successfully because of their complex origin and because of the vulnerability of a child's developing brain.

Research funding through PRCRP is sorely needed to enhance understanding of the biology of these deadly tumors so that treatments can be more effective and less harmful to children's developing brains. These children incur very substantial medical costs for multidisciplinary care both to treat their disease and to provide follow up care for survivors. The PRCRP program is an investment in the future of these children, and will directly assist those children in military families, facing this diagnosis.

We were greatly encouraged by report language in the FY 2017 Defense Appropriations bill that increased PRCRP funding to \$60 million. This increase represents an opportunity to advance research for children with brain tumors and other life threatening cancers. To maximize the use of these dollars, we urge the committee to make sure that neuroblastoma tumors are included with pediatric brain tumors and both receive a full allocation of funding under the program, given that research on these tumors has been part of the PRCRP program for most its existence.

Furthermore, we encourage that Congress include eligibility in PRCRP be extended to all adolescent and young adult (AYA) and pediatric cancers as a category and ultimately establish a separate a Peer-Review Young Adult, Adolescent and Pediatric Program. More than 86% of the active military fall within the National Institutes of Health AYA age range which is 15 years old-39 years old. Almost half of the active military have children. Cancer is the #1 disease killer of these populations. We believe that a separate program is needed for such a distinct and important group.

We firmly believe that an increase in the FY 2018 PRCRP budget will result in marked progress in understanding the nature and treatment of childhood cancers. The lives of children and young adults depend on vigorous and innovative research programs to combat these diseases. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,