

April XX, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, S-131
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, S-131
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

We respectfully request that your Subcommittee include \$9 million for the Department of Health and Human Service's Gynecological Cancer Education and Awareness Programs in the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This program was authorized in Public Law 109-475, Johanna's Law, which was signed into law by the president in January. We understand that this year's funding constraints are significant, but we believe that this small amount of funding is warranted because -- given the nature of gynecologic cancers, doctors, nurses and cancer survivors agree that providing more information about gynecologic cancers will save women's lives.

Every hour, approximately 10 women in the U.S. are diagnosed with a gynecologic cancer, such as ovarian, cervical, or uterine cancer. Each year, we lose over 26,000 of our mothers, sisters, daughters and friends to one of these terrible cancers.

This is a tragedy. What makes it still more tragic is that many of those deaths could be prevented if more women and the medical community knew the risk factors and recognized the early symptoms of gynecologic cancers so that they could be diagnosed earlier. For example, ovarian cancer, the deadliest of the gynecologic cancers, has a 90 percent survival rate if detected in Stage One and only a 30 percent survival rate if detected in Stage Three or Four. Only 25-30 percent of cases are currently diagnosed before Stage Three.

Gynecologic cancers can be detected early. In fact, a recent study found that 90 percent of women with early stage ovarian cancer had symptoms before being diagnosed. Regular pap tests are highly effective in detecting the pre-cancers that can lead to cervical cancer. However, women need to know what symptoms to watch out for, the need for yearly pelvic exams, and their family history so that they may make the best health care choices. The very nature of these cancers is intimate and oftentimes embarrassing. A national awareness and education campaign

opens up this necessary dialogue and will provide vital information to women and the medical community.

We hope you will support federal efforts to educate the public about gynecologic cancers. Your support of Johanna's Law and the national education campaign will play a crucial role in preventing future and preventable gynecologic cancer deaths. We understand the tremendous fiscal constraints faced by your Subcommittee this year, but given the essential role these education programs will play in promoting women's health, we ask that this funding be a priority as the appropriations process proceeds.

Thank you for considering our views and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,