



A PATIENT-CENTERED FORUM OF NATIONAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESSING PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES IN CANCER

April 25, 2000

The Honorable Arlen Specter
711 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
731 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Specter and Harkin:

The undersigned organizations, representing individuals with cancer, their families, and their caregivers, are writing to express their support for federal funding and oversight of human pluripotent stem cell research. Stem cell research holds great scientific and medical promise, and it should proceed under appropriate guidelines. We believe federal involvement in stem cell research is critical, not only to ensure that there is adequate funding of this research, but also to guarantee that the research is conducted according to appropriate ethical standards.

In December 1999, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) published "Draft Guidelines for Research Involving Human Pluripotent Stem Cells," which establish standards that achieve appropriate ethical protections while allowing this research to proceed. The guidelines also outline NIH's plan to establish a Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Review Group to oversee stem cell research. This review panel will not only provide information about the conditions under which stem cell research is conducted, but will also collect data about its benefits. NIH's involvement is necessary to assure policymakers and the public that stem cell research is being conducted according to ethical standards.

Stem cell research has the potential to advance our fundamental knowledge of cancer and other serious diseases and to accelerate the development of new therapies for life-threatening illnesses. We strongly support biomedical research, and we advocate policies that create a positive environment for such research.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education

American Society of Clinical Oncology

Cancer Care, Inc.

Cancer Research Foundation of America

The Children's Cause, Inc.

Coalition of National Cancer Cooperative Groups

Cure For Lymphoma Foundation

Kidney Cancer Association

National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

National Prostate Cancer Coalition

North American Brain Tumor Coalition

Oncology Nursing Society

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

US-TOO International, Inc.

Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization