



PANCREATIC CANCER ACTION NETWORK®
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It's Time for a Death Defying Strategy: Support the Pancreatic Cancer Research & Education Act (S. 3320/H.R. 745)

We're Not Making Progress on pancreatic cancer and the consequences are deadly

- Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest cancers and is one of the few cancers for which survival has not improved substantially in nearly 40 years. In fact, pancreatic cancer is the only one of the top 10 cancer killers that still has a five-year survival rate in the single digits.¹
- The number of new pancreatic cancer cases and the number of deaths caused by pancreatic cancer are increasing – not decreasing. Most alarmingly, the expected number of new pancreatic cancer cases is projected to increase by 55% between the years 2010 and 2030.²
- 94% of those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer die within the first five years¹ because there are no early detection tools or effective treatments for this disease. Given the research discovery timeline, it is unlikely we will have the tools required to manage the significant, projected increase in expected cases unless we take dramatic action now.
- The National Cancer Institute (NCI) does not currently have a strategic plan to make progress on this deadly killer.

We Need to Step Up the investment in pancreatic cancer research

- Currently, the NCI allocates just 2% of its \$5 billion annual budget for pancreatic cancer research.
- There is no question that when researchers are properly funded, research advances follow:
 - While in 2009 NCI funded approximately 8,700 research grants, contracts and intramural research projects across all forms of cancer, only 471 (approximately 5%) were relevant to pancreatic cancer.³
 - Further, NCI currently funds significantly fewer pancreatic cancer researchers at any funding level compared to the other top five cancer killers. In 2009, only 334 pancreatic cancer researchers were funded, compared to 1,558 breast cancer researchers, 838 prostate cancer researchers, 835 lung cancer researchers and 820 colorectal cancer researchers.³
- Less than 2% of the NCI's 2009 awards for early-career and established investigators (K, F and T awards) had relevance to pancreatic cancer. Even more troubling, NCI reduced the total funding allocated for these important awards from their 2008 level.³
- Given the lack of funding for pancreatic cancer research, senior scientists from other areas of biomedical and cancer research do not have the incentive to apply their knowledge to this disease.
 - Out of the researchers who received NCI funding specifically for pancreatic cancer research, only 32 received funding totaling \$500,000 or more, a level appropriate for senior scientists. By comparison, this level of funding was awarded to 240 researchers in breast cancer, 108 in prostate cancer, and 110 in colorectal cancer. The positive survival trends in these other cancers strongly suggest that these larger grants are necessary to further progress and attract investigators.³

We Need a Unique and Targeted approach to studying this disease

- Pancreatic cancer tumors are different than many other tumors. The cellular make-up of the tumors is different and therefore, specialized research techniques must be applied.
- Numbers are also an issue. An estimated 43,140 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2010 compared to 209,060 with breast cancer.¹
- Due to the wide geographic dispersion of relatively few pancreatic cancer patients, few individual medical centers treat a sufficient numbers of patients to conduct statistically significant research.
- Furthermore, because few patients qualify for surgery and most patients die quickly after diagnosis, scant pancreatic cancer tissue is available for research.
- Additionally, many patients who might consider participating in clinical trials are too sick to do so or die before they can enroll.
- These are challenges that can be overcome, but they require a concerted effort by NCI to develop a specific strategic plan to address these and other challenges in pancreatic cancer research in addition to an infusion of targeted research funding.

The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network is a nationwide network of people dedicated to working together to advance research, support patients and create hope for those affected by pancreatic cancer.