



American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
901 E Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004
202.661.5700
www.acscan.org

July 6, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear President Obama, Leader Reid, Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Leader Pelosi:

As the representative of millions of cancer patients and survivors throughout the United States, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is mindful of the necessity of reducing the federal deficit and the difficulty of the task you face in coming to such an agreement over the next several weeks. That is why we are asking you to make the fight against cancer a national priority. Cancer continues to kill more than 1,500 Americans every day – over 570,000 each year. It strikes one in every two men and one in every three women – our parents, our children, our friends and loved ones.

Even so, we are making progress against the disease thanks to federally supported research and prevention programs. Past bipartisan support for cancer research and cancer prevention and early detection has resulted in reduced rates of death from the disease and corresponding increases in cancer survivorship. Advances in genomic research have given scientists an understanding of why different cancers occur leading to new discoveries about how to turn off the genes that control tumor growth. Real breakthroughs are happening, such that today nearly one in twenty Americans is a cancer survivor, thanks in large part to the scientific advances made possible and supported by the taxpayers. Further progress is dependent upon federal leadership and financial support, and we urge you to make cancer research and prevention funding the highest priority.

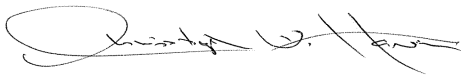
We know that sixty percent of cancer deaths can be prevented through better prevention and early detection and access to health care. For example, the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) has provided more than nine million mammograms and Pap tests to more than three million women and detected more than 47,000 cases of cancer over the past twenty years.

Because so many lives can be saved through tobacco control, better diet and exercise and access to early detection and treatment, we strongly support full funding of the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Prevention has the potential to transform our health system in new and innovative ways that will lead to a healthier population and lower health care costs.

It is important to note that approximately fifty percent of all cancer patients are served by either Medicaid or Medicare. These individuals are generally our oldest, least healthy and most vulnerable citizens, and they have no alternative way of accessing affordable medical care. The viability of Medicare and Medicaid needs to be protected to assure health care coverage for our nation's oldest and most vulnerable, and to maintain the commitment to all Americans that their health care is an important national priority.

Again, we know that the deficit talks will require cuts in spending. But when it comes to deciding what is important, we hope you will agree that a full scale effort against cancer, a disease that kills more than a half a million Americans every year, should be priority number one. For cancer patients it's a matter of life or death, and we thank you for understanding the urgency of the fight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher W. Hansen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Christopher W. Hansen
President