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January 15, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leaders Reid, Hoyer, McConnell, and Boehner:

On behalf of the 25,000 members of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the world's leading professional organization representing physicians who treat people with cancer, I write to urge inclusion of \$3 billion in the economic stimulus package for the National Institute of Health (NIH), with \$600 million to National Cancer Institute (NCI), over the next two years. ASCO also advocates adding these funds, or whatever funds the Congress finds appropriate for the stimulus, to the base funding of NIH so there will be steady and predictable funding for our nation's research institutions.

With its existing peer review system and its broad outreach throughout the U.S., NIH is uniquely positioned to stimulate the economy by disbursing grants within weeks of enactment of this legislation. According to the June 2008 Families USA report, *In Your Own Backyard: How NIH Funding Helps Your State's Economy*, for every dollar NIH awards, there is an impact of \$2.21 in new business activity. A \$1.2 billion investment in NIH could infuse upwards of \$2.65 billion in communities across the country.

NIH funding also supports training for the next generation of researchers, whose discoveries are critical to our country's economic future. Most importantly, an investment in medical research will improve health outcomes not just for patients with cancer, but for patients with all health diseases and conditions.

With recent years of flat funding and the decline in purchase power of NIH, the stimulus funds are critical to maintain the world's leading biomedical research institutions that NIH grants fund. The economic slowdown has resulted in state budget cuts for universities, less charitable giving from foundations and endowments,

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and also resulted in the delay of much needed improvements to our nation's research facilities.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. ASCO stands ready to assist in whatever way is needed as we work toward a stronger health care system for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen Lichter".

Allen Lichter, MD
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Daniel Inouye
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Arlen Specter
The Honorable David Obey
The Honorable Jerry Lewis
The Honorable Todd Tiahrt