Support Robust Federal Funding for Cancer Research

Research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Cancer Institute (NCI) has played a role in every major advance related to cancer prevention, detection and treatment, and has contributed to breakthroughs for many other diseases. ASCO thanks Congress for making the NIH and NCI a priority in the face of difficult budget decisions, by providing a $3 billion increase in FY2018. However, because of the stagnant funding over the last decade there remains a significant decrease in purchasing power even with the FY18 increase. Bipartisan recognition of this funding dearth over the last few years, including the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act, has created an opportunity for funding levels to meet the opportunity of today’s precision medicine.

- **ASCO thanks Congress for its support in FY16, FY17, and FY18.** ASCO applauds and thanks Congress for the $3 billion increase to the NIH to a total of $37.084 billion and a $275 increase to NCI to a total of $5.9 billion in FY2018, and $2 billion increases in both FY2016 and FY2017 for the NIH. It is imperative that Congress continue to provide sustained and robust increases to keep up with the promising advances and treatments on the horizon.
- **Funding must catch up and keep up with opportunity and need.** We are in a time of unprecedented opportunity because of our growing understanding of cancer biology. Continued investment in NIH and NCI will ensure that clinical research is adequately supported and scientific knowledge is leveraged to increase treatment opportunities for patients.
- **Funding cancer research ensures breakthroughs in cancer care.** Breakthroughs in cancer treatment cannot emerge without consistent and predictable investment at the federal level over the course of several years. Major advances in cancer treatment will not occur if the current funding trajectory is altered/decreased.
- **Biomedical research is an economic stimulus.** Many researchers, lab technicians, assistants, and other medical professionals enjoy careers in the biomedical field, thanks to funds from NIH, and funding ensures that the best minds are working on clinical research. Local communities also benefit from having research institutions affecting their economies.
- **Federal Funding of NIH helps to translate discoveries into benefits and treatment for patients.** Federally funded research helps us understand how to use new cancer treatments to improve care and answer comparative effectiveness questions by comparing one treatment to another and combining treatment approaches, e.g., surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy. Federally funded trials often pose research questions that private trials do not.
- **Congress should continue to support and fund the provisions included in the 21st Century Cures Act.** ASCO calls on Congress to fund programs such as the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot and the Oncology Center of Excellence, which will help spur biomedical research.
- **Erosion of the cancer research infrastructure will have serious long-term consequences.** Once gone, it will take years to rebuild and critical opportunities to advance patient care will be lost.

**TAKE ACTION**
Please sustain these critical investments at the NIH and NCI with predictable and robust future funding increases. Pass a fiscal year 2019 budget deal that includes at least a $2 billion increase for the NIH plus $215 million for 21st Century Cures as authorized, or a total of $39.3 billion.

Questions? Please contact Kristin Palmer at Kristin.Palmer@asco.org or 571-483-1643