

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGES

SUITE 200, ONE DUPONT CIRCLE, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

March 3, 1971

TO ALL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC SOCIETIES AND OFFICERS OF MEMBER SOCIETIES

President Nixon, in his State of the Union message, announced a major attack on finding the cause and a cure for cancer. Already several bills have been introduced into Congress authorizing funds for cancer research and establishing administrative procedures for the expenditure of these funds.

At least one of these bills (introduced by Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts and Senator Javits of New York) proposes to establish a National Cancer Authority as a separate and distinct entity from the National Institutes of Health. It is likely that other bills with a similar thrust will be introduced both into the House and the Senate.

At the February meeting of the Council of Academic Societies a resolution was forwarded to the Executive Council of the AAMC recommending that the establishment of a separate Cancer Authority be carefully studied. The Executive Council of the AAMC, after considerable discussion, drew up the resolution which is attached. On February 13th, the AAMC Assembly ratified this resolution.

Essentially the resolution points out that our current state of knowledge of the cause of cancer is not sufficiently precise to vest all cancer research in one Federal organization, separate and distinct from the NIH. It urges that accentuated support of cancer research be managed by the National Institutes of Health and the Cancer Institute. A copy of the resolution is attached.

The Association believes that any thrust to establish a separate cancer research authority analogous to the Atomic Energy Commission or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, would do great harm to the effective role that the National Institutes of Health has played in developing a strong bio-science research program. Therefore, it is urged that you communicate by letters and other means that the accentuated research program in cancer be administered through

the National Institutes of Health. Since several bills have already been introduced, it is suggested that you emphasize the principle of keeping administrative authority within the NIH versus establishing a separate Cancer Authority and not refer to a specific bill.

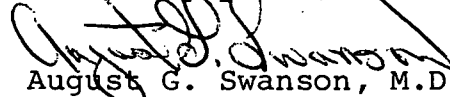
In the Senate the bills have been referred to the Labor and Public Welfare Committee for consideration by its Subcommittee on Health. Letters should go to the chairman and ranking minority member of both the full committee and subcommittee. The chairman of the full committee is Harrison A. Williams, Jr. (D-NJ); the ranking minority member of the full committee is Jacob K. Javits (R-NY). The chairman of the Health Subcommittee is Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass); and the ranking minority member of the subcommittee is Peter H. Dominick (R-Colo.). It also happens that Senators Williams and Javits are members of the Health Subcommittee.

In the House of Representatives the cancer bills have been referred to the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee for action by a subcommittee on Public Health and Welfare. The chairman of the full committee is Harley O. Staggers (D-W. Va.); the ranking minority member is William L. Springer (R-Ill). The members of the Health Subcommittee have not as yet been decided, but there is a high probability that the chairman will be Paul Rogers (D-Fla.), and the ranking minority member will be John T. Broyhill (R-NC). Letters to these members of Congress are important, but it is also important that you inform your own Congressional delegation of your views.

In addition, letters should be sent to President Nixon and to Dr. Edward E. David, Jr., Science Adviser to the President.

I urge that you act on this matter as soon as possible. Cancer and health are subjects of intense interest on the Hill, and the plethora of legislation pertaining to these subjects is going to cause confusion among Congressional decision-makers. It is important that the academic medical community present a clear and definite opinion to the Congress.

Sincerely yours,

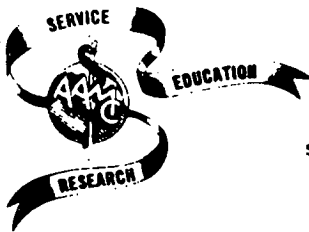


August G. Swanson, M.D.  
Director of Academic Affairs

Enclosures

Addresses: United States Senate                      Dr. David - The White House Office  
Washington, D.C. 20510                                      1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGES

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February 18, 1971

A Resolution  
Adopted by the Assembly of the Association of American Medical Colleges  
on the Fight Against Cancer

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. The search for the causes and the cure of cancer, which spreads over all ages, is a scientific endeavor worthy of our greatest efforts.

New scientific leads, if fully and comprehensively exploited, may make it possible to achieve more adequate preventive and therapeutic capability for coping with this disease.

The present state of our understanding of cancer is a consequence of broad advances across the full scope of the biomedical sciences. In preparing for a greater effort, it is of the utmost importance to understand that despite the progress thus far made, the basic nature and origins of cancer are still not known. The kind of scientific formulation that permitted the development of nuclear energy and that underlies our space exploration does not exist for cancer. Further advance in fundamental biomedical sciences is essential to the solution of the unsolved problems that limit our ability to control cancer. Thus, the development of a special and extraordinary national program in cancer should be in the context of broad support of the related and underlying fields of scientific effort and in an organizational framework which assures sound direction and leadership in advancing this complex set of interrelationships.

The framework of the NIH, which had its origins with the Act of 1930, enlarged by the National Cancer Act of 1937, and the successive statutes creating the several categorical institutes in the post-war period, has made it possible to bring into being the most productive scientific community centered upon health and disease that the world has ever known. It is precisely because this organization has assured a close integration between fundamental scientific endeavor and organized attack upon specific disease problems that this extraordinary blossoming of medical science, and thus our medical capability, has taken place.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of American Medical Colleges wholeheartedly endorses Federal support of a broad-based and intensive attack on the cancer problem called for by President Nixon in his State of the Union Message and of the magnitude envisaged in the report of the National Panel of Consultants on the Conquest of Cancer, and that this major expansion be undertaken as an integral part of the existing national framework for the advancement of biomedical knowledge for the nation's health as provided by the structure of the NIH and the National Cancer Institute.