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Testimony Prepared by the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network

**Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.
This testimony addresses funding for the National Institutes of Health and the National
Cancer Institute.**

Thursday, June 11, 2025

On behalf of The Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN), we want to thank Chairwoman Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, and fellow members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the need to support robust federal funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). BCAN is the leading patient advocacy organization in the United States dedicated to improving outcomes for people impacted by bladder cancer.

Cancer Isn't Just a Statistic—It's a Personal Crisis

Bladder cancer is the seventh most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S. and one of the most expensive to treat over a patient's lifetime. It is the fourth most common cancer among men and our military veterans. Over 725,000 Americans are currently living with this disease, and nearly 84,000 more will be diagnosed in 2025. For these patients and their families, medical research is not abstract—it is the difference between life and death, between fear and hope.

Yet despite its prevalence and cost, bladder cancer research remains chronically underfunded compared to other cancers. Federal investment—particularly through the NIH and NCI—is often the only avenue for advancing understanding and treatment of this disease. Drastically reducing that investment now would leave patients behind and break the fragile momentum we've built toward better todays and more tomorrows for bladder cancer patients and those who love them.

What's at Stake for Bladder Cancer Patients and Families

Proposed cuts to NIH and NCI funding come at a time when science is closer than ever to breakthroughs that could revolutionize bladder cancer treatment. Recent advances in immunotherapy, precision medicine and targeted therapies have offered patients a lifeline. Because of federal support of bladder cancer research, age-adjusted rates for new bladder



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cancer cases have been falling on average 0.9% each year over 2013–2022. Age-adjusted death rates have been falling on average 1.1% each year over 2014–2023.¹ But progress is fragile—and funding interruptions will set back trials, delay drug approvals, and imperil lives.

Reduced federal investment would:

- Disrupt promising clinical trials that may be a patient’s only option;
- Delay access to innovative treatments, especially for patients who have exhausted their current options;
- Widen disparities for underserved communities already struggling to access quality care; and
- Devastate families waiting for answers that only federally supported research can provide.

A Clear, Compassionate Path Forward

Cancer does not discriminate on the basis of political affiliation, income, or geography. Confronting it requires collective commitment and bipartisan action. Investing in medical research strengthens our nation’s health infrastructure, improves outcomes, and helps all Americans live longer, healthier lives. Every dollar invested in medical research generates significant returns—not only in reduced healthcare costs and increased productivity, but in lives saved and improved. We respectfully request that the Committee:

1. Reject any proposed cuts to the NIH and NCI budgets in FY2026;
2. Provide at least \$51.3 billion for NIH in FY2026, including a proportional increase for the NCI to maintain continuity in vital research efforts; and
3. Increase federal investments to accelerate scientific discovery and ensure equitable support for underfunded cancers such as bladder cancer.

¹ National Cancer Institute Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results program, 2025.
<https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/urinb.html>.



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In Closing

On behalf of the bladder cancer community, we thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to funding medical research that saves lives. NIH and NCI funding is not just a line item—it is the bedrock of progress, of promise, and of public health.

Every dollar cut represents a lost opportunity for a patient. Every dollar invested brings us closer to a future where a bladder cancer diagnosis is met not with fear, but with a clear plan, effective treatment, and renewed hope. As the leading voice for the more than 725,000 Americans living with bladder cancer, BCAN stands ready to support your efforts and to partner in advancing the research that will transform lives. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of our request.