

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Calvert, and Ranking Member McCollum:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we respectfully request your support to establish a Bladder Cancer Research Program at the Department of Defense (DoD) with \$8 million in dedicated funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. Our organizations represent bladder cancer patients and caregivers as well as the doctors who treat them and have first-hand knowledge of the acute need for additional support for bladder cancer research to improve the health of America's veterans.

Bladder cancer is the fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer among U.S. military veterans, disproportionately impacting our brave service members who were exposed to highly toxic chemicals during their military service. Approximately 3,200 veterans are diagnosed with bladder cancer every year.ⁱ

While survival rates for other cancers have increased and treatment and risk management paradigms advanced, the five-year survival rate for bladder cancer has not improved in more than 30 years and progress has lagged comparatively. Notably, BCG – the front-line treatment for bladder cancer – is a tuberculosis treatment that is over 100 years old and frequently affected by global supply chain issues. Stagnated survival rates and lack of treatment options speaks to the dire need of new advances and novel therapies in treating and managing bladder cancer.

Congress has previously provided funding for bladder cancer research through the Department of Defense's Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program within the CDMRP. Despite the support to date for innovative and competitive bladder cancer research, there remains an urgent need to provide predictable research funding that will improve the outcomes for this deadly cancer. A dedicated funding line will help attract researchers to this field by demonstrating a sustained commitment to this work.

Military service members represent a unique and disproportionately impacted population due largely to service-related toxic exposures. In the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2021, Congress recognized this connection and directed that bladder cancer be added to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) list of presumptively service-connected conditions for Vietnam-era veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Congress later passed The Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (or PACT Act) extending presumptive eligibility status to Gulf War and post-9/11 era war

veterans diagnosed with certain conditions or diseases following service-related exposure to burn pits. Earlier this year, the VA issued interim final guidance expanding PACT Act benefits to include bladder, ureter, and related cancers.ⁱⁱ

Establishing an \$8 million Bladder Cancer Research Program in FY 2026 would go a long way toward stabilizing the research field and funding groundbreaking science that can finally bend the survival rate of bladder cancer in the right direction.

With your leadership, we can ensure that the brave members of the U.S. Armed Forces, who are disproportionately impacted by bladder cancer, have the investments in research and new advances in treatment and care that they deserve.

Please reach out to Vanessa Cramer, Manager of Legislative, Appropriations and Political Affairs, at the American Urological Association (AUA), at vcramer@auanet.org with any questions.

Sincerely,
Alliance for Aging Research
American Urological Association
Association for Pelvic Organ Prolapse Support
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Caregiver Action Network
Let's Talk UTI
Live UTI Free
Men's Health Network
National Association for Continence
Society of Urologic Oncology
The Endometriosis Summit
United Spinal Association

ⁱ Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), May 11, 2022: <https://news.va.gov/103200/bladder-cancer-and-veterans-what-you-need-to-know/#:~:text=Approximately%20%2C200%20Veterans%20are%20diagnosed,inner%20layer%20of%20the%20bladder>

ⁱⁱ [38 CFR § 3.320](#)