



Ending the Era of Blind Cancer Care and
Creating the Future of Image-Guided,
Minimally-Invasive Diagnosis & Treatment

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U.S. Representatives Urge Critical Improvements in Prostate Cancer Detection

Bipartisan support calls for increased federal funding to improve prostate cancer imaging

Washington, D.C. – Over 20 U.S. representatives* urged the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) to assign an “explicit high priority” in the current budget for research and development of imaging technologies to improve early detection and treatment of prostate cancer. Such a federal investment in prostate cancer, a disease that strikes a man every 2.5 minutes and kills a man every 18 minutes, would save millions of lives and billions of dollars. Prostate cancer has become more common than breast cancer, yet advanced diagnostic imaging technologies comparable to mammograms remain unavailable.

In a letter sent to HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt and NIH Director Elias Zerhouni, the representatives stated:

“Life-saving breakthroughs in screening, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer resulted from the development of advanced imaging technologies led by the Federal Government. It is now time for our Government to lead the way so that men will have accurate and affordable prostate cancer screening exams and similar minimally-invasive treatment tools.”

“The funding of imaging research that will lead to more accurate detection and diagnoses of prostate cancer could eventually save tens of thousands of lives a year,” said Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) who coordinated the letter initiative. “Current treatment for prostate cancer costs our health care system \$8 billion a year, and an additional \$2 billion is spent on unnecessary biopsies. Sadly, it’s also spent on care for those whose diagnosis was missed and who are in the end stages of this deadly disease. We know we are within reach of developing state-of-the-art imaging technology, and making federal funding for this kind of research a priority will give men the information they need to make informed decisions about their health.”

Prostate cancer care crisis

The lack of reliable diagnostic tools is leading to a crisis in care for a disease that can be cured if detected early. This reality is sad for every American man who faces screening for prostate cancer; however, it is particularly devastating for African American males who have significantly higher incidence and mortality rates. Existing tests, including the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test and biopsies, miss cancers and/or underestimate their aggressiveness and thus lead to failed clinical interventions in as many as in 1 in 2 men. Even when PSAs are abnormal, approximately 88% of men – or 1 million per year – undergo unnecessary biopsies and end up not having prostate cancer. Since the current diagnostic tools cannot reliably distinguish aggressive from low-risk prostate cancer, many men undergo unnecessary, costly treatments that cause complications, such as impotence and incontinence.

“Advanced imaging technologies will arm physicians with critical information required to improve quality of care and reduce health care costs,” said Faina Shtern, M.D., president and CEO of the nonprofit AdMeTech Foundation. “Federal support made it possible to advance breast cancer imaging, which transformed early detection and treatment of breast cancer. We salute the U.S. Congress for helping create similar possibilities for men.”

Prostate imaging research a priority

In calling for increased funding, the representatives are echoing the principles of the Prostate Research, Imaging and Men’s Education Act, or PRIME Act (S. 1734/ HR. 3563) – legislation currently sponsored in both houses of Congress that calls for increased funding for prostate cancer diagnostic technology.

The PRIME Act, introduced in the Senate by Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), John Kerry (D-MA) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and in the House by Reps. Cummings (D-MD), Albert Wynn (D-MD) and Dan Burton (R-IN), would dedicate \$650 million to develop the detection technology and educational resources needed to gain the upper hand in the battle against prostate cancer.

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“The PRIME Act is crucial to the long-term health of American men,” said Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN). “We know that when detected and treated early, prostate cancer has a cure rate of over 90 percent. It is time for the federal government to make an investment in the technology that will give physicians the tools they need to end blind patient care.”

“This legislation is a prime example of how taxpayer dollars, put to the right use, can positively impact millions of lives and eliminate billions of dollars from an already strained health care system. Prostate cancer is an epidemic in this country and we have a moral imperative to effectively address this health care crisis impacting men and in particular, the African-American male,” said Rep. Wynn.

AdMeTech Foundation

The AdMeTech Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improved early diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer. The organization develops strategic partnerships with academia, advocacy, industry, and government to facilitate development and implementation of accurate, affordable accessible diagnostic tools for prostate cancer. For more information, log onto www.admetech.org or www.manogram.org.

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*Note: The signatories of the letter included Reps. Cummings (D-MD), Burton (R-IN), Clay (D-MO), Crowley (D-NY), Davis (D-IL), Ferguson (R-NJ), Gonzalez (D-TX), Hinojosa (D-TX), Holden (D-PA), Lee (D-TX), LoBiondo (R-NJ), Marshall (D-GA), McGovern (D-MA), Meeks (D-NY), Norton (D-DC), Ortiz (D-TX), Thompson (D-MS), Towns (D-NY), Wynn (D-MD), Fortuño (R-PR) and Green (D-TX).

To view the entire letter, log onto http://www.admetech.org/DOWNLOAD/final_prostate_funding_dc.pdf.