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## **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Wins NCI Designation As Comprehensive**

*By Kirsten Boyd Goldberg*

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has received recognition as an NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center.

The designation makes St. Jude the first and only cancer center solely focused on pediatric cancer to receive this distinction. The free-standing cancer center in Memphis, Tenn., was founded in 1962 and first received NCI cancer center status in 1977.

"It is always gratifying to see one of the NCI-designated cancer centers achieve comprehensive status: a recognition of excellence, not only in state-of-the-art care and cancer research, but also in patient education, community outreach, and the dissemination of vital information to professionals and the

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### Capitol Hill:

## **Senate Committee Approves Additional \$400 Million For NCI, \$275 Million For FDA**

*By Paul Goldberg*

The Senate Appropriations Committee May 15 passed a supplemental spending bill that would give NIH an additional \$400 million and FDA another \$275 million during the current fiscal year.

The proposed increases face an uncertain future since they are tacked on to an emergency wartime appropriations bill that allocates \$168.9 billion to the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan while placing limitations on the conduct of military operations. Domestic spending measures attached to the bill total \$25 billion.

Unless it is pared down substantially, the bill, which passed by a voice vote by the committee, is likely to encounter problems on the Senate and House floor and would likely trigger a Presidential veto.

The NIH funding supplement is part of a \$1.2-billion "science initiative" that would also provide funds to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Energy. NCI stands to get \$65 million of these funds.

The proposed addition of funds to the FDA budget is remarkable because it appears to have the support of the agency's commissioner, Andrew von Eschenbach. Usually, administration officials refrain from asking for new money. However, von Eschenbach recently responded to pressure and cajoling from Congress and submitted a "professional judgment budget" that

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## Adding Population Science, Center Became Comprehensive

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public,” NCI Director John Niederhuber said. “These extra efforts to establish programs that reach out to surrounding communities and patients are the hallmarks of our comprehensive centers, which now number 41. This enhanced designation is a timely recognition of important contributions and advances made by the dedicated staff of St. Jude.”

St. Jude lacked the depth in epidemiology and population science research required for comprehensive status until recently, said Michael Kastan, the cancer center director.

“Population science is much more difficult for a free-standing institution to obtain, especially when it is pediatric-focused, because it is hard to do population science in the pediatric population,” Kastan said. “Over the last 30 years, as we continued to follow our patients for life, we now have a large cadre of survivors. Now we have a major effort in cancer prevention and control and epidemiology that’s focused on cancer survivorship.”

The St. Jude After Completion of Therapy program, begun in the 1980s, was the first step in adding population science to the center’s research portfolio, Kastan said.

“Since one in 1,000 Americans is a survivor of childhood cancer, we can make a unique impact in studies of survivors of childhood cancer and really understand what the long-term health effects are for

children being treated with chemotherapy and radiation therapy,” Kastan said.

“In 2006, we were able to broaden our population science research with the addition of a new epidemiology and population research program headed by Les Robison, and the establishment of a formal Cancer Prevention and Control Program,” Kastan said.

Robison, who was head of pediatric epidemiology at University of Minnesota before being named chairman of epidemiology and cancer control at St. Jude, is principal investigator of the NCI-funded Childhood Cancer Survivor Study, a multicenter study begun in 1993 that involves 27 pediatric cancer programs in the U.S.

### “Huge Population of Survivors”

“It’s rewarding to see a designation of comprehensive to an institution that is exclusively focused on children,” said Greg Reaman, chairman of the Children’s Oncology Group and professor of pediatrics at George Washington University and Children’s Hospital in Washington, D.C.

“They have a huge population of survivors that they alone have the resources and capability to bring back for follow-up studies, so they are to be congratulated—and envied, in that they are the only uniquely pediatric cancer center in the country,” Reaman said.

“Some of the basic biology discoveries that they have made in a number of diseases, particularly in acute leukemia, have become accepted by groups including the Children’s Oncology Group, in risk classification and risk group assignment,” Reaman said. “So much of what they have done and much of what they continue to do requires more global collaboration, and there are a number of areas in which COG is collaborating with them where they need larger numbers of patients.”

The non-scientific requirements for comprehensive status are education and community outreach. St. Jude has a long history of significant work in both areas. The center is known for its International Outreach Program.

“Our International Outreach Program, directed by Dr. Raul Ribeiro, is a wonderful example of how a medical institution can provide important services to local, national, and worldwide communities,” Kastan said.

Among the outreach and educational initiatives developed by St. Jude are two highly accessed Web-based programs, Cure4Kids and Oncopedia, which provide educational resources for both lay and medical communities.



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Founded Dec. 21, 1973, by Jerry D. Boyd.

St. Jude's outreach efforts include programs in local schools and hospitals. St. Jude also provides cancer education and community outreach throughout the region via its domestic affiliate hospitals located in Huntsville, Ala., Johnson City, Tenn., Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., and Peoria, Ill.

In its competition for the NCI Cancer Center Support Grant, St. Jude received \$27 million for five years. There are 63 NCI-designated cancer centers nationwide, of which 41 are designated as comprehensive.

"Being designated a comprehensive cancer center is a prestigious accomplishment and to be the only pediatric center is an incomparable distinction for St. Jude," said William Evans, St. Jude CEO.

"St. Jude is well known for having innovative programs led by the best and the brightest faculty and staff; now being awarded comprehensive stature places an additional NCI imprimatur on St. Jude and further validates our position among the country's leading cancer centers," Evans said. "This also speaks volumes about Dr. Michael Kastan's strong leadership as our cancer center director."

St. Jude, founded by the late entertainer Danny Thomas, maintains 60 inpatient beds and treats about 260 patients each day, about 5,100 in active status, most of whom are treated on an outpatient basis.

Families never pay for treatment not covered by insurance, and families without insurance are never asked to pay.

St. Jude continues an expansion program to more than double the size of the original campus. The expansion includes the GMP building, the nation's only pediatric research center on-site facility for production of highly specialized treatments and vaccines, and an expanded Department of Immunology.

The hospital's daily operating costs are about \$1.26 million, primarily covered by public contributions. More than 85 cents of every dollar received by the American Lebanese Syrian Associated Charities/St. Jude has gone to the current or future needs of St. Jude.

Each St. Jude patient must be referred by a physician, have a disease currently under study at the hospital, and be eligible for a current research protocol.

The number of St. Jude alumni reached 3,384 this past year. The hospital still keeps in contact with these patients, but their long-term follow-up-treatment is complete. Patients become alumni when they are 18 years old or their disease has been in remission for 10 years, whichever occurs later.

## Cooperative Groups: **SWOG Reactivates Committee On Gynecologic Malignancies**

The Southwest Oncology Group has reactivated its Gynecologic Cancer Committee with a \$250,000 grant from the Marsha Rivkin Center for Ovarian Cancer Research.

The one-time grant to the philanthropic arm of SWOG, the Hope Foundation, will defer the expense associated with starting the committee, including costs of coordination of education and research initiatives, the group's officials said.

The committee will work with medical oncologists to develop phase I/II and phase II trials, the cooperative group said. This focus presents a vehicle for moving crucial discoveries made within NCI Ovarian SPORES more quickly to clinical research. The trials will center on oncogene and suppressor gene targeted therapies for gynecologic malignancies.

Maurie Markman, professor and vice president of clinical research at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, was named the Marsha Rivkin Chair of the GCC.

"The revitalization of the committee has been met with great enthusiasm from the research community, from within SWOG, as well as the NCI," Markman said. "The GCC will allow us to work with both medical oncologists and gynecologic oncologists involved in the care of women with gynecologic cancer."

Since the committee closed in 2003, "oncologists caring for women with gynecologic cancers have had limited NCI-sponsored cooperative groups in which to propose and carry out clinical trials for patients," said SWOG Executive Officer Anne Schott. "This severely limited the number and type of clinical studies available for these women, especially women with advanced disease."

The GCC will extend special membership privileges to physicians and nurses in cancer centers outside of the established SWOG network to provide more women with gynecologic cancers opportunity for trial participation.

SWOG has rejoined the Gynecologic Cancer Intergroup and also has representation on the Steering Committee at the NCI.

SWOG, headquartered in Ann Arbor, Mich., has an operations office in San Antonio, Tex. and a statistical center in Seattle, Wash. The group's network of more than 5,000 physician-researchers practice at nearly 550 institutions.

*In the Cancer Centers:*  
**Centers Seek \$1 Per Person  
To Accelerate Cancer Research**

The Cancer Research Alliance, an organization comprised of 12 U.S. cancer centers, is asking 303 million Americans to donate \$1 to cancer research.

The campaign, dubbed the “Infinite Power of One” has two goals: to activate Americans to take matters into their own hands by joining together to exercise their collective power over cancer, and to raise funds to accelerate innovative cancer research at the participating cancer centers.

The public can join the campaign by visiting the campaign’s sponsor, Celebrations.com, through June 15. After donating, each person will be asked to add his or her photo to the “Infinite Power of One” Healing Mosaic online.

The Cancer Research Alliance is comprised of 12 NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers:

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Fox Chase Cancer Center, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center, Arthur C. James Cancer Hospital & Richard Solove Research Institute, Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center, Roswell Park Cancer Center, and Helen H. Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at University of California, San Francisco.

“Patients and families are often intrigued and inspired by our research, but often don’t believe a small donation can make a difference,” said Donald Trump, president and CEO of Roswell Park Cancer Institute. “We hope that this campaign demonstrates that each dollar counts—just as every single minute in the laboratory counts—and that collectively, we can make a significant impact for tomorrow’s cures.”

CRA was founded in 2006. Further information is available at [www.cancerresearchalliance.org](http://www.cancerresearchalliance.org).

**RAVI PANDEY**, professor of oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, received a five-year, \$2.9 million NCI grant to identify multifunctional photosensitizers for image-guided photodynamic therapy of brain and other tumors. Pandey will lead a multidisciplinary research team from Roswell Park and the University at Buffalo. Participating RPCI investigators include **Allan Oseroff**, chairman, Department of Dermatology; **Janet Morgan**, Department of Dermatology; **Youcef Rustum**,

chairman, Department of Cancer Biology; **Robert Fenstermaker**, chairman, Department of Neurosurgery; and **Michael Ciesielski**, Department of Neurosurgery. . . . **BRUCE STILLMAN**, president of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. A native of Australia, Stillman came to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory as a postdoctoral fellow in 1979. He was promoted to the scientific staff in 1981 and has been director of the Cancer Center at Cold Spring Harbor since 1992. In 1994, Stillman succeeded **James Watson** as director of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and was appointed president in 2003. His research focuses on how DNA replication is duplicated in cells. . . . **SCOTT HIEBERT** was named associate director for basic science programs at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. Hiebert, professor of biochemistry and leader of the Signal Transduction and Cellular Proliferation Program at Vanderbilt-Ingram, is known for his work in on the mechanistic basis of acute leukemia. He succeeds **Jennifer Pietenpol**, the B.F. Byrd Professor of Oncology and VICC director. Hiebert has grants from NCI and National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. . . . **ERIC HORWITZ**, vice chairman and clinical director of the radiation oncology department at Fox Chase Cancer Center, was elected vice-president of the American Brachytherapy Society. He will serve a one-year term and will be president-elect of the society. Most recently, he was treasurer. At Fox Chase, Horwitz developed advanced programs using intensity-modulated radiation therapy, image-guided radiation therapy and brachytherapy. He integrated the use of an MRI treatment simulator into prostate cancer treatment planning for both permanent, low-dose prostate implants and external radiation therapy. . . . **LOMBARDI COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER** at Georgetown University received \$800,000 from the Avon Foundation to support the Capital Breast Care Center. The check was presented May 4 at the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. The Avon Foundation has provided \$3 million to the Capital Breast Care Center since its opening in October 2003. Also at Lombardi, **Shawna Willey**, member of the Breast Cancer Program and director of the Betty Lou Ourisman Breast Health Center at Georgetown University Hospital, was elected president of the American Society of Breast Surgeons. . . . **PEDIATRIC BRAIN TUMOR** Foundation Institute at Duke University received a \$6 million grant from the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation to continue research in gene-based therapies and vaccines for childhood brain tumors. **Darell Bigner** is director of the PBTF Institute at Duke University.

*Professional Societies:*  
**ASCO Special Awards Honor  
Major Research Contributions**

The physician who identified the BRCA1 gene as an inherited mutation linked to breast cancer and the father of Tamoxifen, as he is known, are among the notable awardees to be honored by the American Society of Clinical Oncology at its annual meeting in Chicago in June.

“Here is a group of highly-accomplished individuals, each of whom is using their immense talents for the compassionate purpose of improving the prevention, treatment and care of cancer,” said Gabriel Hortobagyi, past president and chairman of the Special Awards Committee.

The 2008 Special Awards honorees:

**V. Craig Jordan** is the recipient of the 2008 David A. Karnofsky Memorial Award for his pioneering breast cancer research advances. Jordan was the first scientist to demonstrate tamoxifen’s effectiveness in the prevention of breast cancer, and he has been instrumental in the creation of several “designer estrogens.” Jordan serves as vice president for medical science at Fox Chase Cancer Center, where he also serves as the Alfred G. Knudson Jr. Chair in Cancer Research.

The Science of Oncology Award will be presented to **Mary-Claire King**, the American Cancer Society Research Professor of Medicine and Genome Sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle. She was the first to provide evidence of the genetic inheritance of breast cancer through her work on the genomic localization of the BRCA1 gene, for which she holds a U.S. patent.

**Patricia Ganz**, professor of health services and medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles, and director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control Research at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, will receive the American Cancer Society Award for her leadership in the fields of breast cancer research and prevention. She has spent 25 years investigating quality-of-life and quality-of-care outcomes in patients with cancer.

The B.J. Kennedy Award for Scientific Excellence in Geriatric Oncology will be presented to **Hyman Muss**, professor of medicine at the University of Vermont College of Medicine. He is also co-chairman of the Cancer in the Elderly Working Group for Cancer and Leukemia Group B. Muss has devoted his career to the study of breast cancer in older women and to the improvement of care for these patients.

The 2008 Pediatric Oncology Award will be

presented to **Larry Kun**, chairman of the Department of Radiological Science at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital and professor of pediatrics and radiology at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. A dedicated research scientist, his studies focus on radiation therapy and the functional outcomes of pediatric cancers.

The Distinguished Service Award for Scientific Achievement will be presented to **Joseph Bertino** for his dedication to cancer research and scientific inquiry, as well as his exceptional record of service to the society. Bertino’s investigation of mechanisms of resistance to drugs such as methotrexate has garnered him numerous accolades. He serves as the interim director of the Cancer Institute of New Jersey and professor of medicine and pharmacology at the UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

ASCO Past President **Karen Antman**, provost of the Medical Campus and dean of the School of Medicine at Boston University, will receive the Distinguished Service Award for Scientific Leadership. Antman is widely recognized for her development of a standard treatment regimen for sarcoma.

The society also plans to pay special tribute to its members whose significant volunteer efforts have led to the betterment of the organization. The 55 ASCO members who have given 20 or more years of volunteer service will receive the Statesman Award.

## **ASCO Honors Community Practices For Clinical Research**

The American Society of Clinical Oncology and The ASCO Cancer Foundation will honor 10 community oncology practices for their efforts to improve care of people with cancer through participation in clinical trials.

The practices will receive the Clinical Trials Participation Awards June 1 at the ASCO annual meeting in Chicago.

“Virtually every cancer treatment available today is the direct result of clinical research,” said ASCO President Nancy Davidson. “The Clinical Trials Participation Awards honor practices’ dedication to developing new ways to slow, halt, cure and prevent cancer through clinical research.”

The winners were selected based on a number of factors, including their patient accrual rates and accrual of minority and underrepresented populations. Further consideration was given to practices with high-quality audit reports and investigators in good standing.

The 2008 Honorees include:

Cancer Care Specialists of Central Illinois,  
Decatur, Ill.

Cancer Consultants, Las Vegas.

Fort Wayne Medical Oncology & Hematology,  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Hematology-Oncology Associates of Central New  
York, East Syracuse, N.Y.

Southern California Kaiser Permanente Oncology  
Research Program, San Diego.

Medical Oncology-Hematology Consultants,  
Wilmington, Del.

MeritCare Roger Marris Cancer Center CCOP,  
Fargo, N.D.

Ochsner Clinic Foundation, New Orleans.

Texas Oncology-Baylor Sammons Cancer Center,  
Dallas.

William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Mich.

The program is supported by a grant from the  
Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups, which enables  
ASCO to provide award recipients with a travel grant  
to attend the annual meeting.

## **Jay Harris Of DFCI To Receive ASCO's Bonadonna Award**

The American Society of Clinical Oncology will present the Gianni Bonadonna Breast Cancer Research Award to Jay Harris, professor and chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Brigham and Women's Hospital at Harvard Medical School.

Harris' main research interest is the use of radiation therapy in the multidisciplinary management of breast cancer, with a focus on establishing the most effective and safe radiation treatment for patients. During the Gianni Bonadonna Breast Cancer Research Award and Lecture, to be presented at the ASCO annual meeting, he will share his recent research on the evolution and changes in local treatment of breast cancer and its implications in the clinical setting. He will also look forward in terms of the future of breast cancer treatment.

"I am thrilled to be a recipient of the Gianni Bonadonna Breast Cancer Research Award," said Dr. Harris. "Dr. Bonadonna has devoted his life and career to advancing medicine and improving the care and treatment of people living with cancer. He is an amazing scientist with a human connection and I look forward to honoring his legacy with my future research endeavors."

Harris also serves as residency program director for the Harvard Radiation Oncology Program. Harris graduated from Stanford University School of Medicine and did his residency at the Joint Center for Radiation Therapy at Harvard Medical School. He has written six books and currently sits on four editorial boards in the oncology field. He is the senior editor of *Diseases of the Breast*, now in its third edition.

Supported by a grant from GlaxoSmithKline Oncology, the Gianni Bonadonna Breast Cancer Research Award and Fellowship is a \$10,000 annual award that recognizes an active clinical or translational researcher with a distinguished record of accomplishments in advancing the field of breast cancer. The Bonadonna Award is comprised of an endowment, allowing the award to be available for many years to come, and it is accompanied by a one-year, \$50,000 fellowship grant that will be awarded by The ASCO Cancer Foundation to an early-career breast cancer researcher who will work in the lab at the recipient's institution. The 2008 fellow will be announced at a later date.

The award is named after Gianni Bonadonna, whose work has led to the development of successful and widely used treatment regimens. Bonadonna conducted the pivotal cyclophosphamide, methotrexate and fluorouracil (CMF) trial that ushered in the widespread acceptance of adjuvant chemotherapy as part of the curative treatment of breast cancer, a finding that changed the course of how breast cancer is treated. Also, Bonadonna designed and conducted the first clinical trials exploring the use of doxorubicin and developed the doxorubicin, bleomycin, vinblastine and dacarbazine (ABVD) protocol, which remains the gold standard for treating Hodgkin's disease. Bonadonna works at the Istituto Nazionale Tumori in Milan, Italy.

Harris is the second recipient of the Gianni Bonadonna Breast Cancer Research Award, preceded by Daniel Hayes, clinical director of the Breast Oncology Program at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center. Hayes named Vera Maranci of the University of Michigan as the 2007 Gianni Bonadonna Breast Cancer Research Fellow.

## **ASCO Foundation Awards \$7.6 Million For Research**

The ASCO Cancer Foundation will award \$7.6 million to support clinical and translational research designed to improve cancer prevention, treatment and care.

The grants will be awarded to 62 researchers and

three community oncology practices at the society's annual meeting in Chicago, May 31-June 3.

"We are currently in the longest period of flat and declining federal funding for cancer research to date, and without appropriate investment, the opportunity to develop better treatments for cancer care will be lost or delayed," said Joseph Bailes, chairman of The ASCO Cancer Foundation Board of Directors. "The ASCO Cancer Foundation supports progress in cancer by funding researchers at all stages of their profession—enabling oncology's best and brightest to pursue promising research initiatives."

Established in 1983, The ASCO Cancer Foundation Grants Program is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The program is one of the largest among professional medical societies and funds leading clinical oncologists across a broad range of specialties from around the world. Since its inception, the society has awarded over 600 grants totaling more than \$48 million that have helped to transform the way cancer is prevented, detected and treated.

Although each grant has its own set of specific criteria, leading candidates demonstrate ability for independent investigation, proven commitment to careers in clinical cancer research, or have made major accomplishments in their field. The promising research efforts of this year's recipients include patient use of complementary and alternative medicine, the investigation of new immunotherapy treatments, and the incorporation of personalized medicine and gene therapy strategies for the treatment of head and neck and lung cancers.

**Translational Research Professorship:** The ASCO Cancer Foundation's newest grant, the professorship is awarded to physicians who are full-time professors at academic medical centers and have made significant contributions to the field of cancer research. Each recipient will receive \$500,000 over five years to support continued efforts to bring advances in basic sciences into the clinical arena, and to serve as mentors for other translational researchers.

The 2008 recipients are: Bruce Johnson, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Everett Vokes, University of Chicago.

**Advanced Clinical Research Awards:** These awards are presented to physicians who have five to 10 years' experience and are full-time faculty members in a clinical setting at an academic medical center. Each winner will receive a three-year award totaling \$450,000 to support original research currently not funded. This year's recipients were chosen for their unique, patient-

oriented approaches to research in breast cancer, sarcoma and hematologic malignancies.

The 2008 recipients are: Advanced Clinical Research Award in Breast Cancer, Lajos Pusztai, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center; Advanced Clinical Research Award in Hematologic Malignancies, Mark Levis, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins; Advanced Clinical Research Award in Sarcoma, Raphael Rousseau, Centre Léon-Bérard; Scott Schuetze, University of Michigan.

Career Development Awards are presented to physicians in their second, third or fourth year as full-time faculty members in a university setting. Each of this year's 13 winners will receive a three-year grant totaling \$200,000 to establish an independent clinical cancer research program.

Young Investigator Awards are presented to physicians in their final year of a fellowship program or in their first year post-fellowship. Each of this year's 43 recipients will receive a one-year grant of \$50,000 to fund his or her investigative studies as they begin their careers in clinical oncology research.

Community Oncology Research Awards are designed to support clinical researchers at the community level to enhance their research programs. Each practice will receive a one-year grant of \$30,000 to help develop a high-quality clinical trials program.

The 2008 recipients are: Maine Center for Cancer Medicine, Scarborough, Me.; Northern New Jersey Cancer Association, Hackensack, N.J.; Oncology Care Consultants, Frederick, Md.

### Capitol Hill:

## **FDA Requests More Funding In Response To Sen. Specter**

(Continued from page 1)

seeks \$275 million during the current year to enable the agency to improve its performance.

Sources said the nine-page document was submitted for clearance to HHS, but clearance was not granted before von Eschenbach submitted the funding proposal to Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), ranking member of the Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Unlike NCI, which von Eschenbach headed, FDA had no "bypass budget" authority and its commissioners are not expected to provide their professional judgment budgets to the President and Congress.

Von Eschenbach's extraordinary document was



put together in response to a May 1 letter from Specter. The commissioner responded expeditiously four days later, on May 5.

“As you requested in your letter, I am providing to you an assessment of immediate resource needs based on my professional judgment as the FDA Commissioner and without regard to the competing priorities that the agency, the President, and their advisors must consider as budget submissions to Congress are developed,” von Eschenbach wrote to Specter.

This exercise in suspension of fiscal reality and political considerations is the central element of the NCI bypass budget, which von Eschenbach used as the central program document in his quest to “eliminate suffering and death due to cancer” by 2015. The 2015 goal has since been quietly abandoned by the Institute.

Borrowing a page from the NCI playbook, von Eschenbach’s letter to Specter stated that the agency needed to spend \$125 million on food protection, \$100 million on drug safety, and another \$50 million on “modernizing FDA science and workforce.” These numbers are included in the committee document.

“These additional resources will accelerate the changes required for FDA to protect and promote the health of all Americans in a rapidly changing world that poses new, emerging threats to the safety of food and medical products,” von Eschenbach wrote to Specter.

“Recent reports of food and drug safety being severely compromised underscore the lacking resources of the FDA to do its job,” Sen. Herb Kohl (D.-Wisc.), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, said in a statement. “This increase in resources for the FDA will help provide the agency with the means to hire more food safety inspectors, open two offices overseas, and take additional steps in protecting our food and drug supply.”

The agency’s first bypass budget is posted at <http://www.cancerletter.com/publications/special-reports>.

### FDA News:

## **FDA Hiring Initiative Seeks Applicants For 1,300 Jobs**

Biologists, chemists, medical officers, mathematical statisticians, and investigators are among the experts in demand as FDA begins a multi-year hiring initiative.

The agency said it is seeking to hire hundreds of individuals with science and medical backgrounds to help meet the agency’s responsibilities to assure the safety and efficacy of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, food, cosmetics,

and products that emit radiation.

In fiscal 2008, the agency hopes to fill more than 600 new positions and to fill over 700 others to implement the FDA Amendments Act of 2007, the Food Protection Plan, and the Import Safety Action Plan.

The Office of Personnel Management has granted “direct-hire authority” to the FDA, an appointing authority for filling vacancies when a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates exists. It expedites hiring of qualified candidates by eliminating certain rating and ranking preferences. Qualified candidates could be on the job in as little as three weeks.

The agency said its “critical need” occupations are medical officers, consumer safety officers, chemists, nurse consultants, biologists, microbiologists, health/regulatory/general health scientists, mathematical statisticians, epidemiologists, pharmacologists, pharmacists, and veterinary medical officers.

For further information, see [www.fda.gov/jobs/jobfairs08.html](http://www.fda.gov/jobs/jobfairs08.html), or submit a c.v. and cover letter to [joinourteam@fda.gov](mailto:joinourteam@fda.gov).

### In Brief:

## **ASTRO Offers New Program**

AMERICAN SOCIETY for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology has begun a practice quality improvement project, called Performance Assessment for the Advancement of Radiation Oncology Treatment program. PAAROT allows ASTRO members to satisfy the American Board of Radiology Maintenance of Certification program requirements online. . . . **PREVENT CANCER** Foundation honored three contributors to cancer early detection and prevention at its Annual Dialogue for Action in Colorectal Cancer Screening conference in Baltimore April 8-10. **Anita Mitchell**, colorectal cancer survivor, was awarded the Cancer Prevention Laurel for Advocacy. **Claudia Baquet**, professor of medicine and associate dean for policy and planning at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, was awarded the Cancer Prevention Laurel for National Leadership. **Joseph Sung** was awarded the Cancer Prevention Laurel for International Leadership. Sung is an associate dean at the Chinese University of Hong Kong Faculty of Medicine. . . . **SETH LUNDY**, medical device lawyer, has joined the firm of King & Spalding as a partner in its FDA/healthcare group in Washington, D.C. Lundy, who provides regulatory counseling to medical technology companies and healthcare providers and suppliers, was a partner with Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P., also in Washington.



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