

The "Research Cures Cancer" Campaign

"Research Cures Cancer" Campaign Misleads Public and Congress

Press Advisory
From the Cancer Prevention Coalition
January 25, 1995

Introduction

A statement by national organizations representing over 5 million Americans warned of misleading efforts by treatment groups and the cancer drug industry to allocate more tax dollars towards funding cancer research.

The statement responded to a Washington, D.C. kickoff of the National Coalition for Cancer Research's industry-sponsored "Research Cures Cancer" campaign, which is lobbying Congress to increase support for the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) programs.

The statement sent a message to policymakers that further funding is not going to cure cancer. It stressed that NCI's priorities are fixated on research, on treatment, and molecular biology, while issues of environmental and workplace-induced cancers are trivialized. The reason for the failed war against cancer is not a shortage of funds but their gross misallocation. NCI has devoted minimal funding to cancer prevention. Furthermore, NCI has failed to inform Congress and the public of a wide range of avoidable causes of environmental and occupational cancers.

The organizations concluded by calling

for an appointment of a new director at NCI who is more responsive to growing national concerns on prevention of the cancer epidemic.

The Statement

On January 25, 1995 in Washington, D.C., the National Coalition for Cancer Research will launch an industry-funded "Research Cures Cancer" campaign which misleads Congress and the public into the groundless belief that further research is the answer to the cancer epidemic. The Coalition, sponsored by the American Cancer Society and the cancer drug industry, is lobbying Congress and taxpayers to provide the National Cancer Institute (NCI) with more research funding.

Twenty-five years since President Nixon and Congress inaugurated the National Cancer Act, the war against cancer has failed. In spite of over \$25 billion of taxpayers funding, cancer rates have escalated to epidemic proportions while our ability to treat and cure most cancers remains largely unchanged.

For decades, NCI policy and priorities have remained narrowly fixated on research, on treatment, and basic molecular biology. Despite its questionable relevance, molecular biology receives over 50% of NCI's \$2 billion annual budget. Nevertheless, molecular biologist and current director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Harold Varmus, is encouraging still more emphasis on basic molecular biology research in the NCI.

The reason for the failed war against can-

cer is not a shortage of funds but their gross misallocation. NCI has directed a minimal priority to cancer prevention. Furthermore, NCI has failed to inform Congress and the public of a wide range of avoidable carcinogens in the air, water, food, consumer products and the workplace. Research on such exposures receives a minuscule 5% of NCI's annual budget. Reduction of exposures to carcinogens in the workplace and the environment are likely to reverse the current epidemic.

With the NCI directorship being vacated next month, it is time to see the NCI face up to escalating cancer rates and its imbalanced preoccupation with research on treatment and molecular biology. As organizations representing 5 million Americans, we demand that President Clinton appoint a leading scientist with strong credentials and clear commitment to cancer prevention as director of the NCI.

The Cancer Prevention Coalition and the co-signing organizations also demand:

- NCI must be held accountable for its failed policies and the \$25 billion in taxpayer support in the war against cancer.
- NCI must undergo radical reforms in its programs, priorities, and leadership.
- Cancer prevention must receive greater emphasis in NCI policies.
- The NCI budget must be held hostage to such reforms under the terms of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

The Signatories

Breast Cancer Action

San Francisco, CA

Cancer Prevention Coalition

Chicago, IL

Center for Constitutional Rights

New York, NY

Center for Media & Democracy

Madison, WI

Citizen Action

Washington, DC

Environmental Research Foundation

Annapolis, MD

Food and Water, Inc.

Marshfield, VT

Greenpeace USA

Chicago, IL

Mother Jones magazine

San Francisco, CA

Pesticide Action Network

San Francisco, CA

Project Impact

Oakland, CA

Pure Food Campaign

Washington, DC

Radiation and Public Health Project

New York, NY

Women's Community Cancer Project

Boston, MA

Women's Environment & Development Organization

New York, NY