

# The Crisis in Cancer Research Funding



American Society of Clinical Oncology

The nation's investment in cancer research is paying off. Cancer death rates are decreasing, survival rates are increasing and treatments are becoming more targeted and less toxic. But we are now in the midst of the longest sustained period of flat funding for cancer research in history. The budgets for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) have been flat for five years—adjusted for inflation, funding has fallen significantly.

**“These cuts threaten progress against cancer, at a time when the scientific potential has never been greater.”**

Dr. Nancy Davidson,

ASCO president, breast cancer expert at John's Hopkins University

## Vital Cancer Research Programs Being Cut

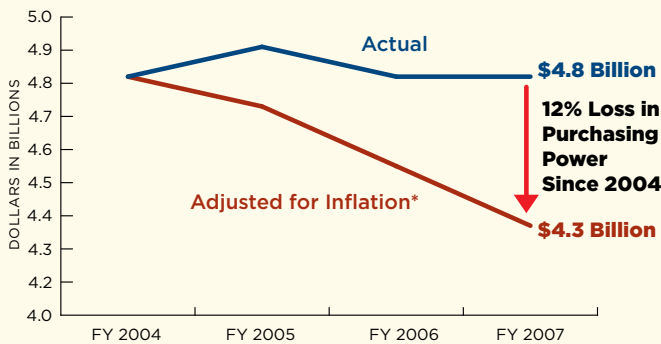
NCI's ability to fund cancer research has been severely hampered:

- Currently able to fund only 20 percent of grant applications
- Funding for genetic, epidemiological, behavioral, social, applied and surveillance cancer research has decreased by more than \$24 million over the past several years
- Programs designed to shorten the time it takes to translate laboratory research findings into treatments were cut by 8 percent in 2007
- A \$12 million reduction to the Community Clinical Oncology Program has meant cutting 1,900 patients from trials of new drugs and nearly 1,000 patients in cancer prevention and control trials from 2006 to 2008

NCI's Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program enrolls more than 30,000 patients per year in hundreds of cancer clinical trials. In response to the threat of a 10 percent budget cut, in 2007 the cooperative groups had to:

- Close research programs in brain cancer, melanoma, sarcoma and pediatric cancers
- Postpone or delay up to 100 phase II and III clinical trials
- Reduce the number of patients participating in clinical trials by almost 3,000

NCI Budget: Decreasing in Real Dollars

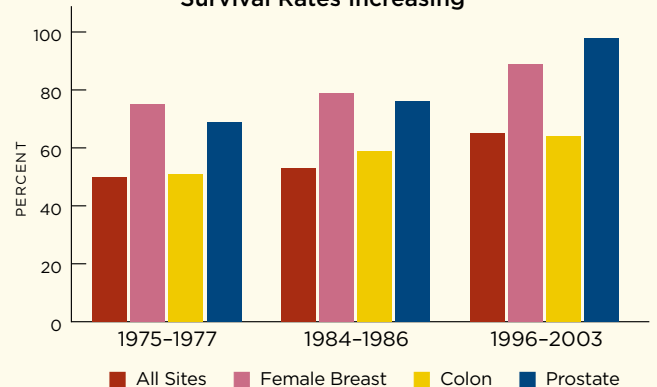


\*Biomedical Research and Development Price Index Source: <http://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov>

## Investment in Cancer Research is Paying Off

- Cancer death rates are dropping faster than ever—about 2.1 percent a year from 2002–2004—nearly double the rate from the 1990s
- Survival rates for the most common cancers—including breast, colon and prostate—are rising
- There are now more than 10 million cancer survivors in the U.S.
- Treatments are becoming more targeted with fewer side effects

Survival Rates Increasing



\*Recent changes in classification of ovarian cancer have affected 1996–2002 survival rates. Source: National Cancer Institute



# Need for Renewed Investment

## Cuts Threaten U.S. Research Infrastructure, Leadership and Future Investigators

Flat funding is also having a dire effect on the nation's biomedical research infrastructure and global competitiveness.

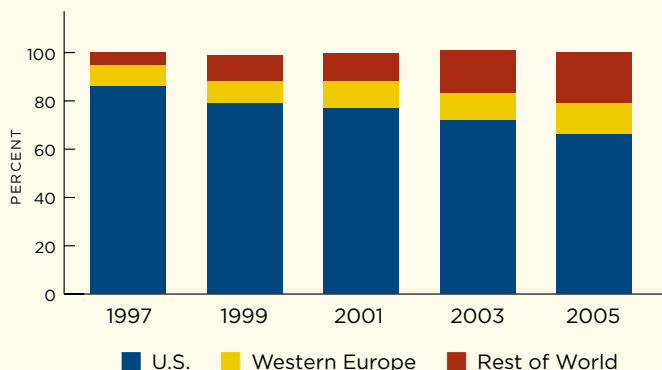
- The Cooperative Groups report a 50 percent reduction in new protocol concepts (ideas for new research projects)
- The number of clinical trials for new drugs being conducted outside the U.S. is increasing
- Researchers are abandoning cutting-edge projects that may be less likely to be funded and spending more time seeking funding
- Many students no longer see the promise of a career in science, choosing other careers instead

## ASCO Calls for 6.6 Percent Increase in NIH Budget

Progress against cancer requires a consistent commitment over time. ASCO and others in the biomedical research community are calling for a minimum 6.6 percent increase in the NIH budget for Fiscal Year 2009. ASCO is advocating for this increase to take advantage of the extraordinary scientific potential for advancing cancer care. This increase is necessary to help reverse the effects of flat funding, keep pace with inflation and help realize the potential of recent discoveries. Urgent research needs include:

- New treatments for the most deadly cancers (e.g., lung and pancreatic cancers)
- Better tools to detect cancers in their earliest stages, when they are most treatable
- Additional ways to manage the side-effects of cancer and its treatment, such as pain and nausea
- Translating the growing backlog of genetic research discoveries into effective treatments

**U.S. Losing Ground**  
Submissions to FDA for Drug Trials

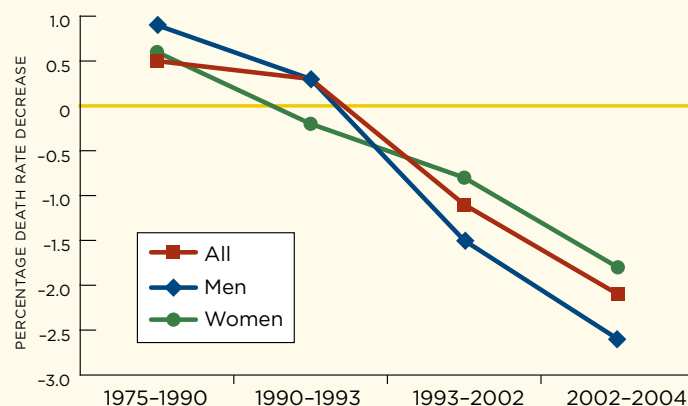


Source: Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development, Outlook 2007

**“Without additional support, progress against cancer will be delayed and key scientific opportunities lost. The 1.4 million Americans who will be diagnosed with cancer this year can’t wait.”**

Dr. Allen Lichter, ASCO CEO

**U.S. Cancer Death Rates Decrease**



Source: ACS

