



Association of American Cancer Institutes

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March 13, 2013

## Winship Director Asks Congress for Stronger Research Support

Walter J. Curran, Jr., MD, Executive Director of the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University, in Atlanta, today urged Congressional leaders to shore up support for cancer research against a projected \$1.6 billion drop in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding.

Dr. Curran testified on behalf of the Association of American Cancer Institutes, which represents 95 of the nation's premier academic and free-standing cancer research centers.

Speaking before a U.S. House of Representatives' appropriations subcommittee, Dr. Curran focused on the relationship between NIH and the nation's cancer centers. The National Cancer Institute (NCI), a branch of NIH, is a primary source of funding for cancer centers. NCI stands to lose approximately \$250 million over the next 10 years under across the board federal budget cuts, known as "sequestration," that took effect March 1.

"Continued progress in cancer research depends on the sustained efforts of highly skilled research teams that work across the country at all cancer centers, and are supported by the NCI," Dr. Curran said.

"A cut to NIH and ultimately NCI will result in decreased funding to cancer research in all parts of the country and will devastate many of the research teams working on new treatments and new cures. Rebuilding such teams, even after a short break in funding, could take years."

The impact of budget cuts through fiscal year 2021 has already begun to affect research progress at Winship, Dr. Curran testified.

"Immediate effects will be felt in research labs, with promising research slowed or even shut down, pending projects wiped off the boards, the next generation of bright young researchers unable to learn cancer research at the side of experts, and layoffs among trained cancer staff, including those who coordinate clinical trials that test new cancer therapies."

Dr. Curran invited political to leaders to visit cancer centers in order to witness the vital role the institutions play in the health of constituents as they battle cancer.

Dr. Curran serves as Associate Vice President, Cancer, Woodruff Health Sciences Center and as the Lawrence W. Davis Chair of Radiation Oncology, at Emory University School of Medicine. He is a Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Scholar and principal investigator on several National Cancer Institute grants and is considered an international expert in the management of patients with locally advanced lung cancer and malignant brain tumors.

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*Representing 95 of the nation's premier academic and free-standing cancer research centers, the Association of American Cancer Institutes is dedicated to promoting leading research institutions' efforts to eradicate cancer through a comprehensive and multidisciplinary program of cancer research, treatment, patient care, prevention, education and community outreach.*