

February 1, 2022  
The Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St NE Salem, OR 97301

Dear Legislators,

~~The continuing global pandemic~~ COVID-19 ~~presented~~ ~~continued to present~~ additional challenges this past year, refocusing our priorities and once again elevating the importance of health care, education, science and research. ~~While we spent time focusing on~~ We quickly adapted to the changing landscape of caring for cancer patients during the pandemic, ~~while simultaneously our focus~~ maintaining a focus on research and education. ~~Indeed, never wavered and~~ the pandemic has exposed the critical need to ensure a robust pipeline of health care professionals.

~~The~~ Throughout the global health care challenges of 2021, the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute continues to provide high quality cancer care to thousands of people, and our research into the causes and cures for cancer ~~continues~~ persists. The vision of the Oregon Legislature and its generous support of the Knight Cancer Challenge has helped us to maintain this steadfast commitment, and for that, we thank you.

We are pleased to provide the following update on our progress toward meeting the requirements and commitments of the legislation authorizing \$200 million in bond support.

#### **Building for cancer innovation, expanded services**

Despite the pandemic, labs continued to operate in the Knight Cancer Research Building, home to almost 500 researchers and support staff. Some aspects of our work are different; lab personnel wear masks, socially distance, and adhere to strict safety protocols designed to protect them and their research. Administrative personnel continue to work remotely, and our scientists work on rotating schedules to keep density in the building low. After almost two years of operating this way, we are finding efficient ways to move forward, and our pace has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

~~Recruitment continues, because—~~ Thanks to the support of the Legislature, ~~—~~ this building ~~is~~ plays a key ~~role in our efforts to attract~~ part of attracting the best and brightest scientific minds from around the world, ~~allowing recruitment to continue~~. These physician scientists and their teams are providing care to Oregonians, driving new innovations in cancer treatment, and training Oregon's next generation of researchers and providers.

Of the \$200 million in construction bonds the state invested in the Knight Cancer Challenge, \$160 million went to funding the Knight Cancer Research Building, and \$40 million funded clinical trial space in the OHSU Center for Health & Healing Building 2 (CHH2). CHH2, where cancer patients are treated, has also continued to operate through the pandemic. After a small dip in patient volume at the beginning of the pandemic last year, our medical providers have seen a slight increase in the number of patients we treat. We have also expanded digital health visit capabilities to protect front line providers and patients, and adopted enhanced safety procedures when the patients come to CHH2 for infusion and other therapies.

### **Growth and recruitment**

Since March 2014, we have added 1,402 new employees, ranging from entry level administrative and research employees to highly skilled professionals, clinicians and scientists. These team members are helping us expand cancer prevention and treatment options for Oregonians, and are bringing increased grant funding and capital investment to OHSU and the State of Oregon. This rapid growth has been fueled by the success of the Knight Cancer Challenge, of which the Legislature played a significant part.

### **Clinical trials**

We are continuing our efforts at the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute to grow clinical trial and research study capacity on our main campus and throughout the state. In 2021, more than 1,936 Oregon residents participated in clinical trials and research studies associated with the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute. These research participants represented 35 of the 36 Oregon counties and approximately 31.8% ~~percent~~ of these patients are from rural areas. OHSU currently provides Oregonians with access to 790 cancer clinical trials. While participation in clinical trials declined slightly in 2021, we were able to increase representation from rural areas of Oregon.

### **Research funding from NCI**

We continue to leverage the funding the Legislature provided to bring more dollars into Oregon to support our innovative research. OHSU ~~continues to be~~remains among the top 25 cancer research centers in the U.S. in terms of funding from the National Cancer Institute. Cancer researchers at OHSU received \$51.0 million in competitive funding awarded by the National Cancer Institute in fiscal year 2021, down from \$56.6 million the previous year; this has a direct correlation to the pandemic.

### **Cancer network provides statewide access**

The OHSU Knight Cancer Network is a statewide cancer outreach network, designed to reduce cancer risks and to improve clinical outcomes for Oregonians. The network represents a collaboration of select community hospitals and oncology programs throughout Oregon that work with the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute to deliver cancer prevention, clinical care, and clinical research services targeted to the specific needs and risks of each community. It also provides patients with cancer access to the best treatments close to home, eliminating the burden of traveling for treatment.

### **Community Partnership Program reaches more than 60,000 Oregonians in 36 counties**

The OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Community Partnership Program, started as a result of the Knight Cancer Challenge, provides grants, training and technical assistance, and networking opportunities to support organizations across Oregon in identifying, addressing and evaluating locally adapted strategies to community identified cancer issues. It has invested more than \$5.1 million in 164 projects, reaching all 36 counties in Oregon since its launch in 2014. Completed projects within the program have reached nearly 62,000 Oregonians to date, and 82% ~~percent~~ of grants aim to address rural cancer issues.

As we began the partnership program we quickly realized that in order to ensure every community across the state had the opportunity to successfully apply for and use funds to address cancer-related needs no matter how large or sophisticated they are, we would need to provide significant technical assistance. As a result, 70-75% of the budget goes to fund projects directly. About 19%-20% goes toward funding grantee support that provides trainings on project design and evaluation, carries out program evaluation, and supports costs to bring grantees to an annual conference to share learnings. Less than 10% is for administrative costs to build and maintain the grant submission platform, ensure funds get to grantees, and manage the conference. This is far below typical administrative costs applied to grants.

In 2021, we issued two-tiered funding cycles and awarded \$849,265 to fund 25 projects. The Community Partnership Program impact report on the Community Partnership Program website outlines the program's impact since its inception. Impact is demonstrated through grantmaking, capacity building and collaboration, as well as through select stories of completed projects from across the state.

**Thank you**

Once again, thank you for your support of OHSU and the Knight Cancer Institute. We know our partnership with the Oregon Legislature will continue to yield life-changing results for Oregonians. Should you require additional information about our progress or plans, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours,

| Danny Jacobs, M.D., M.P.H., ~~F-A-C-S~~  
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