

TO: Chairman Troy Waymaster
Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Roy A. Jensen, MD – Director, The University of Kansas Cancer Center

RE: SB 255

DATE: March 17, 2020

Chairman Waymaster and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the committee in support of SB 255, which creates the cancer research and public information trust fund providing \$10 million dollars in annual funding to The University of Kansas Cancer Center.

At The University of Kansas Cancer Center we are on an urgent journey to break the devastating grip of cancer. It is our life mission, a journey we have embarked on to prevent and conquer all cancers, now and for future generations.

Our first step on this journey was to achieve National Cancer Institute Cancer Center (NCI) designation in 2012. We are the only cancer center in the region, and one of only 71 in the nation, to receive this distinction, a symbol of research and clinical excellence.

What does NCI designation mean for Kansas? NCI centers provide the best care known to medicine and continuously elevate the standards in cancer care. This means our 150 disease-specific physicians are not only offering the most

innovative cancer treatments available, they are defining the cancer treatments of tomorrow. No other cancer program in the region can match the depth and breadth of our 350 cancer researchers and clinicians.

KU Cancer Center has raised the bar of care across all cancer types and leads clinical research trials to find ways to prevent, treat and cure cancer. Typically, we manage nearly 480 clinical trials at a time and are actively enrolling patients in at least 180 trials. Since 2010, we have enrolled more than 22,600 individuals in clinical trials. Our investigators also develop and lead clinical trials to find better and more innovative ways to treat cancer, allowing our patients to receive the best treatment close to home.

But there is more to do! Over the next 10 years, the number of cancer diagnoses are predicted to increase 45 to 50 percent: 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. Each year, approximately 15,300 Kansans are diagnosed with cancer. Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Kansas due to several factors: aging population, obesity, tobacco use and HPV (human papillomavirus). This is why we must achieve NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center status, the next step in our quest to conquer cancer. Today marks approximately 556 days until the next NCI application due date.

What does it mean to be an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center?

Comprehensive Cancer Center designation is the premier ranking awarded by the NCI. It is the gold standard, given to cancer centers that are recognized for their trailblazing research and leadership in developing cutting-edge treatments.

Comprehensive cancer centers attain this elite distinction by demonstrating significant depth and breadth in basic, clinical and translational research, with a clear focus on the cancers most affecting their communities. This requires a deep understanding of the cancer issues faced by those we serve and responding with tailored solutions. To move from NCI Designation to NCI Comprehensive, we must: demonstrate fundamental basic research discoveries that build on our collective knowledge of cancer's biology and apply these findings to advance new therapies; identify cancer risk factors and develop actionable cancer prevention strategies; and create more clinical trial opportunities for patients, including underserved populations.

What does Comprehensive Cancer Center status mean to our region? If you are diagnosed with cancer, it means you will be treated at one of the top cancer centers in the country. For family and friends, it means your loved one will be cared for by the world's leading cancer care experts with access to a broader portfolio of progressive clinical trials. If you are a civic or business leader it means world-class cancer care in your community, a hallmark of all great cities.

For KU Cancer Center, becoming one of only 51 centers in the U.S. with this designation means access to more research dollars, complementing our ability to grow our team of internationally renowned researchers and physician-scientists.

Earning Comprehensive status will take us to the next level, producing even higher survival rates for patients in the communities we serve as we pursue the ultimate victory in conquering all cancers.

The state of Kansas, the legislature and the governor have been strong supporters of the quest for NCI since 2007. We simply would not have achieved NCI designation without the support of the state. Currently, the \$5 million in annual funding supports activities donors are unlikely to fund including: salary support for key scientific leaders, growing the cancer clinical trials office and supporting operations and administrative infrastructure that are the foundation of the Center.

We need additional financial resources because we must do more! To put forth the best NCI Comprehensive application we need more funding to allow us to recruit, develop and retain more nationally recognized physicians and scientists; file investigational new drug applications with the Food and Drug Administration; conduct more clinical trials; expand our community outreach and engagement activities; construct a new cancer research building on the KUMC campus; and expand the depth and breadth of our training and education initiatives.

KU Cancer Center aims to do nothing less than fundamentally transform the cancer experience – to give all people in our region greater access to breakthrough ideas and novel treatments. For these reasons, I ask you to support SB 255.

Thank you.