OCRA ovarian cancer research alliance

Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRP): FY2020 Funding Ask

For FY2020, OCRA asks the Congress to fund OCRP at $35 million (+$15M increase).

- ✓ The Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRP) is one of 29 disease-specific medical research programs under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) at the Department of Defense. For 5+ years, OCRP has received level funding at $20 million annually. This pales in comparison to other CDMRP programs, which are funded at much higher levels. For instance, CDMRP's prostate cancer program received $100 million and its breast cancer program got $130 million for fiscal year 2018.

- ✓ OCRP is the *only* federal funding stream dedicated to ovarian cancer research. This is particular notable because a recent study suggests that other federal funding sources may be falling short when it comes to investing in ovarian cancer research. The study compares allocations of National Cancer Institute (NCI) research funding across eight different cancer sites and found that when cancer mortality rates are taken into account, "[f]unding for gynecologic cancers is significantly lower than that for other cancer sites."[i]

- ✓ At the current funding level, OCRP is only able to support a fraction of meritorious research applications and ends up forgoing promising research proposals. In 2017, the program fell $32.2 million short of being able to fund all research applications that were scored in the outstanding or excellent ranges and was able to fund *only 4 percent* of the total number of applications it received.

Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRP): Key Facts & Stats

- The Department of Defense's (DoD's) Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRP) has been instrumental to funding several key studies that have led to new discoveries and advancements in the understanding of ovarian cancer. OCRP invests in clinical practice that meaningfully improves patient outcomes. The research pipeline moves slowly and the progression from bench to bedside can take years, or even decades. Translational research is further along in the pipeline and for today's patient community, may offer the best hope for accelerating progress toward long-term survival.

  The Need:

  - ✓ Alarmingly, mortality rates have not significantly improved in the past 50 years. Nearly 25 percent of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer will die within a year, and less than 50 percent will survive five years.

- ✓ Of the 850,000 female service members, wives of active duty military and adult daughters of active duty military,[ii] approximately 11,800 will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer over the course of their lifetimes.[iii] The cost of ovarian cancer to our military is great, not only in terms of troop readiness, but also in terms of treatment: over these patients' lifetimes treatment could cost TRICARE an estimated $971.2 million.[iv]

- ✓ The urgent need for advances in ovarian cancer was underscored by a 2016 review by the National Academy of Medicine (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine) finding that "there remain surprising gaps in the fundamental knowledge about and understanding of ovarian cancer, including basic biology, risk factors, diagnosis, delivery of care, and survivorship."[v]

To date, OCRP-funded research has produced:

- **FDA accelerated approval of rucaparib**, an oral therapy for treatment of advanced ovarian cancer that has failed other treatments
- **OVA1, an FDA-approved blood test** that, when combined with imaging, can better identify patients at high risk for malignant ovarian cancer
- ***Ovarian Cancer Risk-Reducing Surgery: A Decision-Making Resource***, a book/resource to assist women with the genetic mutation BRCA1/2 or with a family history of ovarian cancer in determining whether or not to have prophylactic surgery
- **Revised treatment guidelines;** a National Comprehensive Cancer Network panel endorsed an OCRP-funded research recommendation to offer genetic testing for all known ovarian cancer susceptibility genes to all women, regardless of age or family history
- **A RAD51D genetic testing** kit for women with ovarian cancer with or without breast cancer

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[i] Bankhead, Charles. Gyn Cancer Research Gets Short Shrift in Funding, MEDPage Today, Mar. 25, 2019. https://www.medpagetoday.com/meetingcoverage/sgo/71980

[ii] The lifetime risk of a woman developing ovarian cancer is 1.4% according to the SEER Fact Sheet available here: http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/ovary.html

[iii] Military Demographics for 2012. Available here: http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf

[iv] The average cost of frontline ovarian cancer therapy is $82,000, per the National Institutes of Health. http://costprojections.cancer.gov/annual.costs.html

[v] National Academy of Medicine, Ovarian Cancers: Evolving Paradigms in Research and Care, Mar. 16, 2018. Accessed Feb. 26, 2018: http://nationalacademies.org/HMD/reports/2016/state-of-ovarian-cancer