March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Please accept this letter as a programmatic funding request of $500,000 for the creation of a national mesothelioma patient registry for inclusion in the final Fiscal Year 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

As you know, mesothelioma is an aggressive form of cancer that occurs most frequently in the lining of the lung or abdomen, and sometimes even in the lining of the heart. Unfortunately, the five-year survival rate for mesothelioma patients is grim and ranges between 5-9%, and too often, mesothelioma patients who are registered on the National Program for Cancer Registries and the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Registry sadly pass away before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can adequately capture the data. Thus, a national mesothelioma registry would allow the CDC to track mesothelioma patients, their demographics, and other important information in a timely manner that could help develop new treatments and potential cures.

Additionally, the need for a mesothelioma specific registry has become heightened as researchers at the CDC have noticed that “despite regulatory actions and the decline in use of asbestos the annual number of malignant mesothelioma deaths remains substantial.” In their report, the researchers note that the “occurrence of mesothelioma deaths among persons aged <55 years,” suggests that there is still “ongoing occupational and environmental exposures to asbestos fibers and other causative elongate mineral particles.” Such findings are a cause for concern, as clearly, our current efforts are not enough. Unquestionably, a national mesothelioma registry would not only allow researchers to surveil and monitor these unsettling trends, but it would allow for a database to be created to establish priorities for successful outcomes; develop and revise standards of care and treatment with best practices for patients with mesothelioma; share evidence-based information between physicians across the country; implement benchmarks to improve care in mesothelioma clinics; and identify centers that provide the most beneficial care to patients.
While I commend the Subcommittee for including language in the Fiscal Year 2017 and Fiscal Year 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Committee Reports recommending funding at a level of $1.1 million for a national mesothelioma patient registry and tissue bank under the CDC’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health programs, it is my hope that the Subcommittee will take its support one step further this year and include programmatic funding of $500,000 for the creation of a national mesothelioma patient registry for inclusion in the final Fiscal Year 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact my Legislative Assistant, Laney Copeland, laney.copeland@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-4272.

Sincerely,

Rob Woodall
Member of Congress

---


2 Id.