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Congress Urged to Approve Funding for Melanoma Research

Leading Nonprofits in Melanoma Applaud Allocation of New Funds

WASHINGTON, D.C. — This week, a bi-partisan joint Congressional Committee filed their final version of the Fiscal 2015 Omnibus Appropriations bill that includes \$50 million for the Department of Defense's Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP). This proposed allocation represents a significant increase in research funding, up from \$25 million in 2014. The bill will now go to both chambers of Congress for final approval. Once approved, eleven cancers, including melanoma, will be eligible to compete for this money.

Deeply committed to enhancing the availability of breakthrough therapies for people with melanoma, the Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) and the Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) applaud Congress for their dedication to finance cancer research.

"Investing in research and the development of innovative treatment options is critical to meeting the needs of U.S. service members and the public who are impacted by this deadly disease in growing numbers," said Tim Turnham, Executive Director of the MRF. "The proposed increase reinforces the tremendous momentum in discovery and new treatments we've seen in recent years."

This boost in funding comes at an important time for the medical research community. Congressional funding through the PRCRP will also soften the blow of reductions in the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) research budget in progressing melanoma treatment.

"This is a major step forward at a time when the melanoma research field is leading the way for discovery in all cancer areas, with new immunotherapy and targeted therapy treatments. We know that members of our armed forces have been serving in areas with high sun exposure, a major risk factor for developing melanoma, so this investment through the DoD program makes sense and will have extraordinary impact," said Wendy Selig president & CEO of the MRA.

Once the budget is approved, the MRF and the MRA will continue to work with experts in the research community to ensure that newly allocated funds are being used in the most beneficial way with assets afforded to the most promising research initiatives.