

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2022

Norman E. Sharpless, MD
Director, National Cancer Institute
National Institutes of Health
9609 Medical Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr Sharpless:

We write in strong support of the University of Arizona Cancer Center's application to renew its National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Center Support Grant. The UArizona Cancer Center has established itself as a leader in cancer care in southern Arizona and provides a great service to the communities that we represent across the state.

The UArizona Cancer Center is the only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center headquartered in and serving the entire state of Arizona. Founded in 1976 by the late Sydney Salmon, M.D., who led the center from 1976 to 1999, the Cancer Center has been at the forefront of advancing cancer prevention and treatment. The Cancer Center received its first NCI Cancer Center Support Grant in 1978. Banner-University Medical Center Tucson is the center's clinical affiliate and operates local outpatient clinics.

The UArizona Cancer Center strives to alleviate the burden of cancer through compassionate care, transdisciplinary discoveries and translation, and by training researchers and providers to erase inequities that limit patients' access to the highest-quality care. The center's patient population is diverse, with a large rural and elderly population. Its primary catchment area in southern Arizona serves many medically underserved Hispanic and border communities and seven Native American tribes. The center's larger impact area includes the entire state of Arizona and 22 federally recognized tribes. The Office of Community Outreach and Engagement plays an essential role facilitating communication and learning between the researchers and residents to ensure patient-focused research and care.

Collaboration is what makes the Cancer Center a leader in research on breast, prostate, head and neck, gastrointestinal, and skin cancers. The center has three established scientific research programs that work together, including in Cancer Biology, Cancer Prevention and Control, and Clinical and Translational Oncology. The Training and Education Office trains the next generation of diverse cancer researchers, and their work is further enhanced through multidisciplinary teams and innovative working groups. For example, the cancer center participates in an NCI Cancer Moonshot Initiative-funded effort between Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma to improve colorectal cancer screening rates in Native American populations using evidence-based strategies. The center also partners with Northern Arizona University to provide outreach, education, and training to Native American communities. During the pandemic, research from the center found that patients undergoing active chemotherapy had a lower immune response to two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, but that a third dose strengthened the immune response for these patients. A renewal grant is needed to continue this critical work in cancer care prevention and treatment.

Many of us have met with the faculty, staff, and patients who work at and receive care from the Cancer Center. Renewing the center's NCI Cancer Center Support Grant is both a top priority for the University

of Arizona and a matter of interest for many community members in southern Arizona and across the state. The Cancer Center is prepared to meet and maintain the rigorous standards for research, education, and cancer prevention required for NCI designation. As members of Congress representing Arizona and strong supporters of the National Institutes of Health, we are eager for our constituents to continue to access top cancer care, innovative prevention programs, and contribute their diversity to clinical trials.

In accordance with all existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines, we respectfully ask that you give the renewal of the UArizona Cancer Center's Cancer Center Support Grant full and fair consideration. Thank you.

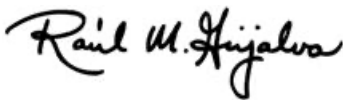
Sincerely,



Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



Mark Kelly
U.S. Senator



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress

CC: Dr. Larry Tabak, Acting Director, NIH