

March 21, 2016

The Vice President  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

We strongly support the goals of the Cancer Moonshot initiative, to find cures for cancer and to reduce cancer mortality in the United States. While death rates have declined for all cancers combined, the disease continues to have a devastating impact on too many families. Intensified federal efforts to prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer are fully justified, and we congratulate you and President Obama for focusing renewed national attention on the investments necessary to make accelerated progress against this dreaded disease.

We are concerned, however, that the initiative may be undervaluing the vital role that public health and prevention have played -- and must continue to play -- in reducing cancer incidence and mortality. Since the beginning of the "War on Cancer," the most notable cancer successes have been due to the power and efficacy of prevention. The massive reductions in lung, cervical, colorectal and gastric cancer mortality rates are almost entirely due to a focus on public health and prevention approaches (including screening).

We urge you to pay careful attention to the balance between treatment and prevention-related investments. The development of new and innovative therapeutic cancer interventions is vital, but history has shown that the greatest impact in reducing cancer mortality rates has come from preventing cancers. While curative treatments often appear more exciting to the public, investments in public health and prevention research hold even more promise for both short- and long-term reductions in cancer incidence and mortality rates. Developing cancer cures is essential, but controlling cancer is also a policy and public health challenge. We must operate on both fronts.

As a recent commentary noted, "The cancer moonshot must incorporate the best available tools. Our goal in the ensuing decades should be to eliminate cancer mortality. Clearly, a cancer cure is a laudable approach to that goal, but it is also possible to imagine a world where many types of cancer, like polio and rabies, will simply no longer occur."<sup>1</sup> Investments in public health and cancer prevention can make an enormous impact on reducing cancer incidence and mortality and should be a priority of the Cancer Moonshot initiative.

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> Neugut, AL and Gross, CP. Targeting the Cancer Moonshot. *JAMA Oncology*. March 3, 2016.

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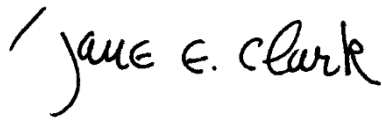
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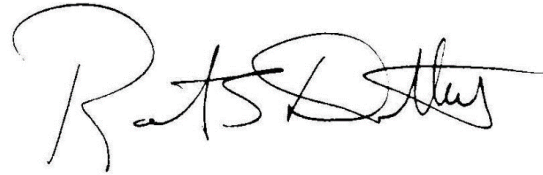
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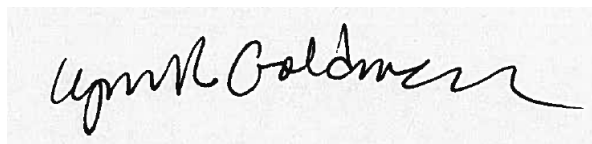
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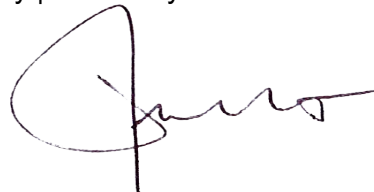
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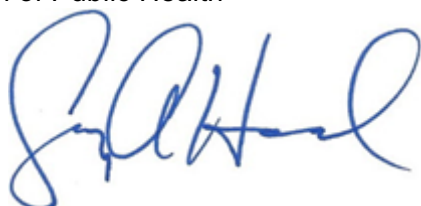
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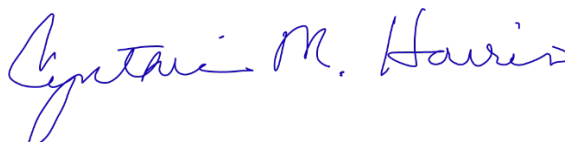
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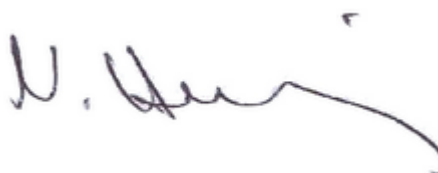
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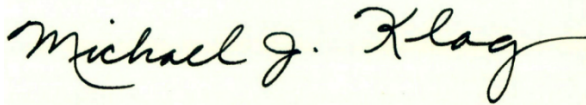
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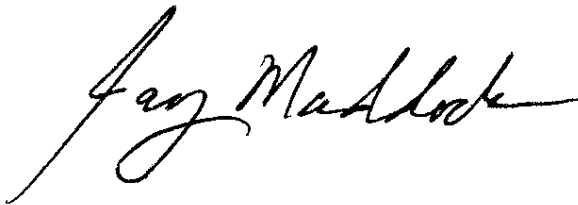
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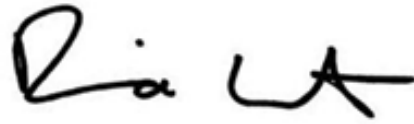
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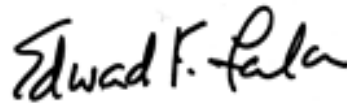
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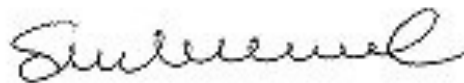
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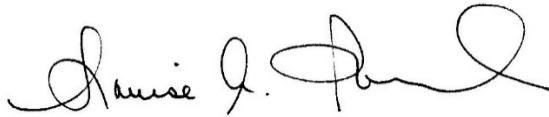


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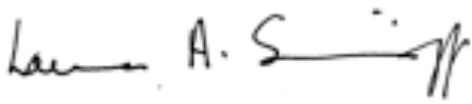




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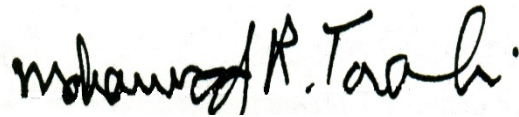
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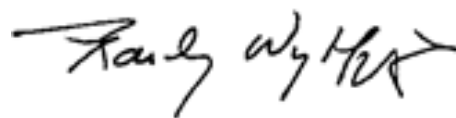
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