



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

December 11, 2023

Douglas R. Lowy, M.D.
NCI Acting Director, National Cancer Institute
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Lowy:


I write in strong support of the University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute's revised application for a National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Center Support Grant.

As the 57th Governor of the State of New York and the former Congressional representative for the 26th Congressional District, I am keenly aware of the importance that NCI-designated centers play in the health of our communities and how vital it is for the University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute to have this designation. Although we are fortunate to have seven NCI-designated cancer centers in our State, only one is located outside of New York City. Wilmot is upstate New York's largest cancer center and has a long history of outstanding clinical care and research breakthroughs, including pivotal contributions to the pioneering HPV cancer vaccine. With an NCI designation, Wilmot will continue to push the frontiers of cancer science, increase access to life-saving treatments and therapies, enhance community engagement with underserved populations, reduce disparities in cancer outcomes, and expand collaborations, including with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, the only NCI-designated Center in upstate New York.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in New York State. In 2023, there will be over 118,000 new cases of cancer, and over 32,000 New Yorkers will die of the disease. Data shows that cancer incidence and mortality are significantly higher in the area served by Wilmot, which is made up of 27 counties and has a higher poverty level than the U.S. average. There are drastic and unacceptable cancer disparities by geography, race, and ethnicity among this population. Among other indices of disparity, individuals residing in the geographic area served by Wilmot experience longer delays between diagnosis and the onset of treatment and higher rates of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.

That is why I urge your consideration of this application. New York State has recently invested funds directly to support Wilmot's expansion of its research infrastructure. The University has also pledged \$100 million to Wilmot over the next five years as part of its strategic plan. An NCI Cancer Center Support Grant would allow Wilmot to expand its efforts to reduce the significant burden of cancer on New Yorkers by guiding efforts and attention where the need is greatest, collaborating with underserved communities to better understand and resolve cancer disparities, and providing greater access to clinical trials and cutting-edge care.

Sincerely,


Kathy Hochul
Governor

cc: Monica M. Bertagnolli, M.D.