

RECALCITRANT CANCER RESEARCH ACT OF 2012 -- (House of Representatives - September 19, 2012)

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, this bill is an example of Congress functioning at its best. As introduced, Congresswoman *Eshoo* and Congressman *Lance*'s legislation addresses a policy goal that resonates with many of us--making progress in our fight against pancreatic cancer. In fact, nearly 300 Members of the House--Democrats and Republicans alike--are co-sponsors of this legislation.

Through the Committee process, Members and staff worked on a bipartisan basis to respond to input from the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute (NCI), pancreatic cancer advocates, and cancer researchers. I believe the end result--the bill before us today--represents a fair and balanced approach.

H.R. 733 now focuses on a broader category of cancers, the so-called recalcitrant or deadliest cancers. The legislation directs the NCI to develop scientific frameworks to guide research efforts on recalcitrant cancers--defined as those cancers with 5-year relative survival rates below 50 percent. The bill requires the Director of the NCI to complete frameworks for at least 2 recalcitrant cancers that meet additional criteria set forth in the bill--having a 5-year survival rate of less than 20 percent and causing at least 30,000 estimated deaths--within 18 months of enactment. It is my expectation that NCI will begin first with pancreatic and lung cancer. But in doing so, I also expect NCI to consider applying the scientific framework model to other recalcitrant cancers.

Importantly, the bill ensures there will be an opportunity for outside experts to offer their perspective as the Director of NCI works to complete each scientific framework. H.R. 733 also calls on NCI to submit each completed framework to Congress and post it on the Department of Health and Human Services' website.

No doubt, many Members like myself have met with constituents and heard the heart-wrenching stories of those families who have been impacted by pancreatic cancer. The unfortunate reality is that we rarely hear from survivors of pancreatic cancer themselves since they are so few. In California alone, nearly 4,000 people will lose their lives to pancreatic cancer this year. An additional 12,000 Californians will die from lung cancer. Their families--and many others--have asked for our support in improving the diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic, lung, and other recalcitrant cancers.

There's no disputing that great progress has been made in our fight against cancer over the past 40 years. Consider for example the improvement we've seen in the overall five-year relative survival rate for all cancers, and the important discoveries that NCI has made through its Cancer Genome Atlas program in understanding what makes one cancer different from another. Nonetheless, there are certain cancers where we haven't seen as many gains. That's precisely why I support the approach taken in H.R. 733.

I'm very proud of the work of Chairman *Upton*, Chairman *Pitts*, Ranking Member *Pallone*, Congresswoman *Eshoo*, and Congressman *Lance*--as well as all of our staff--on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support passage of this bill.