



## **In Iowa's Interest:**

### **Celebrating the Promise of Cancer Research**

*by Senator Tom Harkin*

May is Cancer Research Month – a time for our country to pause and recognize the landmark accomplishments and life-saving promise of this critical research. And, we are reminded during this month, that one of the best ways we can fight this epidemic and save lives is to continue to research cures, causes, treatments and prevention tools.

Despite the advancements that have been made in recent years, cancer remains one of the greatest health concerns in our nation. It is estimated that in 2010, over 1.5 million Americans were diagnosed with cancer in the United States, causing more than 550,000 deaths. This makes cancer the second most common cause of death in this country. In Iowa in 2010, an estimated 6,400 Iowans will die from cancer, 14 times the number caused by auto fatalities.

In the past years, we have made great strides. Early detection has increased survival rates and new tools have greatly improved the five-year survival rate for many types of cancer, but there is still much work to be done. That is why as Chairman of both the Appropriations Subcommittee that funds medical research, and as Chairman of the Committee that oversees health initiatives, I have actively fought to provide funding at both the national and local levels for cancer research, screening and prevention initiatives. In fiscal year 2011, the National Institutes of Health will fund \$5.8 billion in cancer research. And last year, I secured \$370 million for cancer screening and prevention efforts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Out of those funds, Iowa runs the Iowa Gets Screened program and Care For Yourself programs, which provide free or low-cost screening for colon, breast and cervical cancers. Iowa schools and institutions such as the University of Iowa are also helping to lead the way in cancer research, and I have been honored to help secure nearly \$21 million in NIH funding in 2010 for critical research into lung, prostate and pancreatic cancer, as well as the role of nutrition in cancer prevention.

With Congress focusing on deficit reduction and cost-cutting it will be tempting for some to reduce funding for cancer research that can lead to better treatments, better screening tools and more effective prevention of cancer. But as a nation, we cannot afford to put transformative science on hold, particularly now, when strong investments in medical research could pay extraordinary dividends to our health and economic well-being. Even when considered in purely economic terms, it is estimated that every one percent decline in cancer mortality saves the United States economy \$500 billion. I will fight to ensure that critical funding for cancer research is not cut.

For more information please feel free to contact any of my offices or visit my website at [harkin.senate.gov](http://harkin.senate.gov).