

April 20, 2009

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Kennedy and Hutchison,

On behalf of The Endocrine Society, I am writing to request that you include support for research of rare and ultra-rare cancers in S. 717, the "21st Century Cancer ALERT (Access to Life-Saving Early detection, Research and Treatment) Act." The Endocrine Society is the largest professional organization of endocrinologists in the world, comprising more than 14,000 members worldwide. Our organization is dedicated to promoting excellence in research, education, and clinical practice in the field of endocrinology. The Society's membership is made up of researchers and physicians who dedicate their lives to identifying cures for and treating patients with rare and ultra-rare cancers.

Organs affected by endocrine cancers include the thyroid gland, adrenal glands, ovaries, testes, pancreas, parathyroid glands, hypothalamus and pituitary gland. Except for thyroid cancer and cancer of the reproductive organs, endocrine system cancers are rare. The American Cancer Society estimates that there were over 39,000 cases of non-reproductive organ endocrine cancers in 2008, and more than 37,000 of those were thyroid cancers. However, there is much to be learned about the diagnosis and treatment of these cancers. With the exception of thyroid cancer, the cause of most endocrine system cancers remains unknown. Support for research into rare and ultra-rare cancers in the ALERT Act could provide scientists with the opportunity to make advances in the diagnosis and treatment of these cancers.

Thank you for your consideration of the importance of research into the diagnosis and treatment of rare and ultra-rare cancers. If we can be of assistance to you in any way, please contact Stephanie Kutler, Director of Government Affairs at 301-941-0254 or skutler@endo-society.org.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Carey, MD, MACP
President
The Endocrine Society