NEW YORK STATE SENATE & ASSEMBLY

January 2, 2024

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

Dear Dr. Lowy:

We write in strong support of the University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute's National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Center Support Grant.

As members of the New York State Legislature representing the Upstate NY area, we are deeply concerned about the disproportionate impact cancer has on our constituents and communities. 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 27 county, Upstate area that Wilmot Cancer Institute serves as compared to the rest of New York State and the nation. This region is larger than the size of the States of Vermont and New Hampshire combined and, if considered as a state, would have the second-highest cancer incidence in the nation behind only the State of Kentucky. Of the 27 counties in this area, 26 have a higher poverty level than the U.S. average, including the City of Rochester, which ranks No. 3 in overall poverty among the nation's 75 largest metropolitan areas, and 12 of the 14 counties are part of Appalachian portion of New York State. There are drastic and unacceptable cancer disparities by geography, race, and ethnicity among this population. Among other indices of disparity, individuals in Wilmot's catchment area experience longer delays between diagnosis and the onset of treatment and higher rates of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.

As Upstate New York's largest cancer provider, Wilmot has a long history of outstanding clinical care and research breakthroughs, including pivotal contributions to the pioneering HPV cancer vaccine and pioneering work in cancer supportive care to minimize and address debilitating side effects of treatment. Wilmot features an 87-bed flagship cancer center, 13 outpatient locations, and one of the state's largest blood and marrow transplant programs. Wilmot is a component of Strong Memorial Hospital and is home to the region's first cancer survivorship clinic, and one of the nation's first geriatric oncology clinics. Thanks to NCI

support, Wilmot scientists continue to work at the forefront of cancer-related discoveries, including groundbreaking research on hematological diseases, the development of immunotherapies for solid tumors, and the connection between cancer and aging.

We are eager for our constituents to realize the benefits of a Cancer Center Support Grant. With an NCI designation, Wilmot will be better positioned to push the frontiers of cancer science, expand its efforts to reduce the significant burden of cancer on our constituents 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 novel therapies. Geography and socioeconomic status should not be a disqualifying factor for our constituents to access the highest quality subspecialty multidisciplinary care and clinical trials for rare and complex cancer diagnoses.

Again, we wish to convey our strong support for an NCI Cancer Center Support Grant for the University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute. Given the outsized need of our districts, we appreciate your full consideration of Wilmot's application.

Sincerely,

Assemblymember Harry Bronson
NYS District 138

Senator Samra Brouk
NYS District 55

Assemblymember Demond Meeks
NYS District 137

Senator Jeremy Cooney
NYS District 56

Assemblymember Jen Lunsford
NYS District 135

Senator Robert Ortt
NYS District 62

Assemblymember Sarah Clark
NYS District 136

Senator Patrick Gallivan
NYS District 59

Assemblymember Josh Jensen
NYS District 134

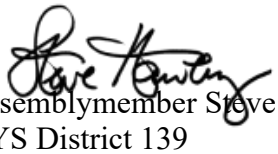
Senator Pam Helming
NYS District 54



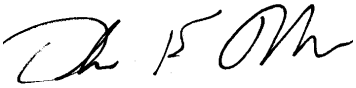
Assemblymember Joe Angeleno
NYS District 121



Senator Joseph Griffo
NYS District 53



Assemblymember Steve Hawley
NYS District 139



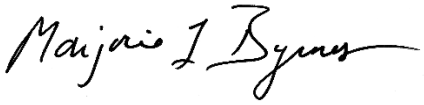
Senator Thomas O'Mara
NYS District 58



Assemblymember Brian Manktelow
NYS District 130



Senator George Borrello
NYS District 57



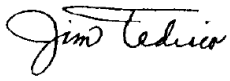
Assemblymember Marjorie Byrnes
NYS District 133



Senator Michelle Hinchey
NYS District 41



Assemblymember Jeff Gallahan
NYS District 131



Senator Jim Tedisco
NYS District 44



Assemblymember Phil Palmesano
NYS District 132



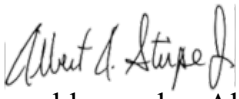
Senator Peter Oberacker
NYS District 51



Assemblymember Pamela Hunter
NYS District 128



Senator Lea Webb
NYS District 52



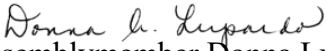
Assemblymember Al Stirpe
NYS District 127



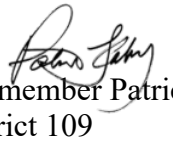
Assemblymember Anna Kelles
NYS District 125



Assemblymember Marianne Buttenschon
NYS District 119



Assemblymember Donna Lupardo
NYS District 123



Assemblymember Patricia Fahy
NYS District 109



Assemblymember John McDonald
NYS District 108



Assemblymember Phil Steck
NYS District 110



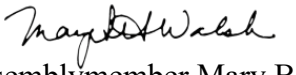
Assemblymember Chris Tague
NYS District 102



Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara
NYS District 111



Assemblymember Carrie Woerner
NYS District 113



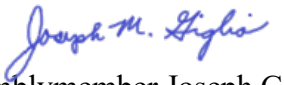
Assemblymember Mary Beth Walsh
NYS District 112



Assemblymember John Lemondes
NYS District 126



Assemblymember Brian Miller
NYS District 122



Assemblymember Joseph Giglio
NYS District 148

cc: Lawrence Tabak, D.D.S, Ph.D.