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July 13, 2005

Mr. Alex Wallau, President  
ABC Television Network  
500 S. Buena Vista Street  
Burbank, CA 91521  
818-460-7477

Dear Mr. Wallau,

Peter Jennings was extraordinarily courageous and generous in sharing his lung cancer diagnosis literally with the world. We are very grateful to him and to ABC.

The silence surrounding this cancer has been devastating politically. Few people are even aware that lung cancer causes more deaths each year than breast, prostate, colon, liver, melanoma and kidney cancers combined. Fewer still realize how little funding goes into lung cancer research.

Cancers with the highest survival rates, and consequently the most activists, receive the most federal funding. Prostate cancer, which has a 5 year survival rate of 99.3%, will receive \$14,369 per death in federal funding this year. Breast cancer, with its 88% 5 year survival rate, will receive \$23,474.

Lung cancer will kill over three times as many men this year as prostate cancer and nearly twice as many women as breast cancer. Yet it will receive only \$1,829 per death in research funding.

The 5 year survival rate for lung cancer has never gone above 15%.

The repercussions of the under-funding go far beyond the current statistics. Promising new early detection protocols that would make a tremendous difference in outcomes go unfunded. Young scientists and doctors do not want to gamble their careers on a cancer that has never been adequately funded.

The stigma of smoking adds to the political dilemma. Smokers are blamed for bringing it on themselves. Smoking is labeled a "lifestyle choice" even though nicotine is as addictive as heroin, and even though 80% of all smokers became hooked before the age of 18. Even non-smokers, who now constitute 10-15% of new lung cancer cases, are tarred by blame. Guilt keeps many of the few survivors from speaking out.

**NO MORE EXCUSES. NO MORE LUNG CANCER.**

Some anti-tobacco programs, which are heavily funded at the federal, state and local levels in addition to private funding, compound the "blame game." They fail to acknowledge that lung cancer is now being diagnosed in more former and non-smokers than current smokers, and do nothing to counter the myth that quitting smoking will eventually eliminate lung cancer risk. Indeed, no thought is being given to the welfare of those who actually went through the difficult process of quitting, and who will always remain at elevated risk for lung cancer.

By breaking the silence, Mr. Jennings has changed the political equation. The speed and depth of the change will depend, to a large extent, on how well we can utilize the opportunity Mr. Jennings has given all of us to get the facts to the public.

We were saddened by the superficial coverage most media gave to Mr. Jennings' announcement and the absence of any in depth reporting on the real state of lung cancer in this country.

We urge you to consider what a powerful legacy could ensue from a thoughtful public discussion on lung cancer. As the only national organization devoted solely to advocating for lung cancer patients and those at risk for lung cancer, our organization and our resources are at your disposal. Our boards include some of the leading experts on lung cancer and we have developed contacts over the years in all areas of expertise related to lung cancer who could be helpful to ABC in developing an in depth program on the issue.

Please understand that we are not asking for your consideration to promote our organization.

There are 45 million current smokers, and 46 million former smokers in the United States, many of whom do not even realize that they are at continuing risk for lung cancer. There is also an ominous increase in the number of people, mainly women, who never smoked being diagnosed with the disease.

It is on their behalf, and in response to Mr. Jennings' unselfish gesture, that we offer our assistance.

Sincerely,

Laurie Fenton  
President

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