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 A PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
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NEWSLETTER



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◆ **HELPING DIRECT PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH** ◆

Last year prostate cancer advocate Bill Stierman of Vienna, Virginia, participated in the evaluation of prostate cancer research proposals submitted to the Prostate Cancer Research Program sponsored by the Department of Defense. Bill was nominated for participation in the PCRCP by the Walter Reed Army Medical Center US TOO chapter. As a consumer reviewer, he was a full voting member at meetings with prominent scientists to determine how \$85 million would be spent for prostate cancer research. The research program is managed by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command at Fort Detrick, MD. Since 1997, Congressional appropriations for this prostate cancer research program have totaled \$395 million.

Bill and other consumer advocates represented the collective view of prostate cancer survivors and patients, family members, and persons at risk to the disease. They assessed the research proposals for relevance to such issues as disease prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life after treatment. Commenting on his role as a consumer reviewer, Bill had this to say:

“Participating in the Prostate Cancer Review Program was a rewarding and eye-opening experience. The opportunity to represent prostate cancer victims was the rewarding part. Getting a sense of the research effort and hearing the scientists assess the promising research proposals was the eye-opening aspect. I was particularly impressed by the fact that a lay person like myself had a voice equal to that of the participating scientists in evaluating the research proposals. A person who is well-read and concerned about prostate cancer issues will be comfortable addressing the various research proposals.”

Since 1997, consumer advocates and scientists have worked together in a unique partnership in evaluating the scientific merit of prostate cancer research proposals. In 2002, 42 consumer advocates joined 300 scientists in the review process. Over 670 research proposals were submitted to the Fiscal Year 2002 program in response to a program announcement that encouraged innovative, multidisciplinary prostate cancer research aimed at the elimination of prostate cancer. **(Continued on page 9)**

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Proposals were solicited across all disciplines, including the basic, clinical, social, and psychosocial sciences, as well as public health, economic, quality of life, alternative therapies, occupational health, nursing research and environmental concerns.

Colonel Kenneth Bertram, MD, director of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, expressed his appreciation for the consumer advocates' perspective in the scientific review sessions -- "They have provided valuable insight into funding decisions and helped the scientists understand the consumers' perspective of innovative research. Likewise, the consumer advocates have been enriched by learning more about prostate cancer through discussing proposed research with scientists and by seeing the potential outcomes of successful research."

US TOO! International chapters and individual members have traditionally supported this unique research effort by volunteering to serve as consumer reviewers. The Fiscal Year 2003 PCRCP is now underway.

**THE WRAMC US TOO NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE
OF THE CENTER FOR PROSTATE DISEASE RESEARCH. GO TO
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