

The Ovarian Cancer Biomarker Research Act would authorize NCI to make grants for public or non-profit entities to establish research centers focused on ovarian cancer biomarkers. Biomarkers are biochemical features within the body that can be used to measure the progress of a disease and predict the effects of treatment. This legislation also authorizes funding for a national clinical trial that will enroll at-risk women in a study to determine the clinical utility of using these validated ovarian cancer biomarkers.

The Society of Gynecologic Oncologists, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, and the American College of Surgeons have all joined together in support of this research developing tools to detect ovarian cancer early, because they know it is critical to improving the rate of survival for women struck by this disease.

The second bill, the Prostate Imaging, Research and Men's Education Act, addresses the urgent need for the development of new technologies to detect and diagnose prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in the U.S., and the second leading cause of cancer related deaths in men—striking 1 in every 6 men. In 2008, it was estimated that more than 186,000 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer, and more than 28,000 men died from the disease.

The Prostate Research, Imaging, and Men's Education Act, or PRIME Act, would mirror the investment the Federal Government made in advanced imaging technologies, which led to lifesaving breakthroughs in detection, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

This bill directs the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to expand prostate cancer research, and provides the resources to develop innovative advanced imaging technologies for prostate cancer detection, diagnosis, and treatment.

In addition, the PRIME Act would create a national campaign to increase awareness about the need for prostate cancer screening, and works with the Offices of Minority Health at HHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that this information reaches the men most at risk from this disease.

The PRIME Act will also promote research that improves prostate cancer screening blood tests. According to a National Cancer Institute study, current blood tests result in false-negative reassurances and numerous false-positive alarms. Some 15 percent of men with normal blood test levels actually have prostate cancer. Even when levels are abnormal, some 88 percent of men end up not having prostate cancer but undergo unnecessary biopsies. Furthermore, the prostate is one of the last organs in a human body where biopsies are performed blindly, which can miss cancer even when multiple samples are taken.

Government initiatives in research and education can be the key to diagnosing prostate or ovarian cancers earlier and more accurately.

These two bills would strengthen our efforts to fight these diseases. These bills are of vital importance to thousands of men and women across our great Nation, and the families and friends who are concerned for their continued health. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and Senate to get these bills passed as soon as possible.