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2500 North State Street
Jackson, MS 39216



The Honorable Michael Guest
450 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2025

Dear Congressman Guest,

I am writing to you as the Director of the University of Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Center and Research Institute to express our strong support for funding the UMMC Vivarium Lab Project. This project is crucial in our efforts to advance cancer research and ultimately achieve National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation, a goal that holds significant promise for improving cancer outcomes in the state of Mississippi.

At the UMMC Cancer Center and Research Institute, we are dedicated to expanding our research capabilities in order to better serve our community and address the pressing health challenges posed by cancer. One of the key components of achieving NCI designation is the recruitment of top-tier PhD cancer researchers who can drive innovation and lead groundbreaking research initiatives. These researchers will play a pivotal role in advancing our understanding of cancer, developing new treatments, and improving patient outcomes.

By investing in the UMMC Vivarium Lab Project, we will not only be able to provide state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for our researchers but also create a conducive environment for collaboration and discovery. This will enable us to attract and retain top talent in the field of cancer research, ultimately positioning UMMC as a leader in the fight against cancer.

Achieving NCI designation is not just a matter of prestige; it is a tangible investment in the health and well-being of the people of Mississippi. With NCI designation, we will be able to offer our patients access to cutting-edge treatments, clinical trials, and comprehensive care that is on par with the best cancer centers in the country. This will help reduce cancer mortality rates, improve survival rates, and enhance the overall quality of life for cancer patients in our state.

I urge you to support the UMMC Vivarium Lab Project and the broader initiative to advance cancer research at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Your support will not only benefit our institution and our researchers but also make a lasting impact on the health of our community. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to discussing this further with you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Rocconi', written over a horizontal line.

Rodney P. Rocconi, MD, FACOG, FASCO
Director, Cancer Center and Research Institute

GREAT CITY MISSISSIPPI

April 2, 2025

Congressman Michael Guest
450 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Guest,

As Executive Director of the Great City Mississippi Foundation, I am writing to express support for the allocation of funds to complete the renovation of the 8th floor in the research building at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). This dedicated space for expanded research holds immense value for the ongoing fight against cancer, particularly in the context of UMMC's pursuit of National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation for its Cancer Center and Research Institute.

Cancer research relies heavily on models which allow scientists to study the complexities of the disease, test the efficacy of new therapies, and gain crucial insights into the mechanisms of cancer development and progression. Expanding UMMC's research capabilities through the 8th floor renovation will provide:

- **Enhanced Capacity for Innovative Research:** Additional space translates to a significant increase in the number and scope of cancer research projects undertaken at UMMC. This will accelerate the pace of discovery and potentially lead to breakthroughs in cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.
- **Attracting and Retaining Top Talent:** State-of-the-art research facilities are critical factors for attracting and retaining leading cancer researchers. The 8th floor renovation will aid in solidifying UMMC's position as a premier research institution, fostering collaboration and propelling advancements in the field.
- **Strengthening the NCI Designation Bid:** NCI designation is the gold standard for cancer centers, signifying the highest level of expertise and commitment to cancer research. Robust research infrastructure is a key criterion for achieving this recognition. The expanded and improved space provided by the renovation will enhance UMMC's competitiveness for NCI designation, which in turn would bring immense prestige and resources to the institution and the state of Mississippi.

The benefits of this project extend far beyond UMMC. Cancer remains a leading cause of morbidity and mortality, and advancements in research at UMMC will ultimately translate into improved patient outcomes across the state and beyond. Additionally, the economic impact of a thriving cancer research program cannot be overstated, creating jobs, attracting investment, and boosting the state's overall scientific profile.

Investing in the 8th floor renovation represents an investment in the future of cancer research at UMMC and to the improved health of Mississippians. It is a strategic initiative that will support the state's efforts to serve as a leader in the fight against cancer, benefiting not only UMMC but also the countless individuals whose lives will be touched by the research conducted within their walls.

I urge you to give this project your full consideration and provide the necessary funding to complete the 8th floor renovation. This investment will have a transformative impact on cancer research at UMMC and contribute significantly to the fight against this devastating disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taylor Nicholas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Taylor" and last name "Nicholas" clearly distinguishable.

Taylor Nicholas
Executive Director
Great City Mississippi Foundation

CC:
Great City Mississippi Foundation Board of Directors
Kristy Simms
Rodney P. Rocconi, MD, FACOG, FASCO