



OFFICE OF THE SENATE PRESIDENT

900 Court St., N.E., Room S-201

Salem OR 97301

www.leg.state.or.us

NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Robin Maxey

(503) 986-1605

robin.maxey@state.or.us

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SENATE APPROVES MEASURE TO FUND CANCER RESEARCH FACILITIES AT OHSU

(SALEM) – The Oregon Senate Friday approved a measure to fund the construction of key research facilities Oregon Health and Science University and boost the Knight Cancer Institutes \$1.2 billion effort to end cancer as we know it.

Senate President Peter Courtney, the first state leader to announce support for the measure in November, praised the decision as a potential “game changer” in the fight against cancer.

“This investment could change what the word cancer means for future generations,” said Courtney (D-Salem/Gervais/Woodburn). “Our children and our grandchildren may not have to live with the fear of cancer the way we have.”

Senate Bill 5703 provides \$200 million in bond funding to pay for the construction of research labs and clinical trial space on OHSU’s South Waterfront campus in Portland. The measure passed the Senate on a 28-2 vote Friday morning.

In addition to providing funding for the needed facilities, the money will also help the University’s Knight Cancer Institute match a \$500 million donation pledge from Nike co-founder Phil Knight and his wife Penny.

In September, the Knights pledged to donate \$500 million to cancer research at the Knight Institute if the university could match their donation by raising another \$500 million over two years. The clock on the challenge started ticking on February 1.

OHSU officials have said that Knight will count the state bond funding toward the university's match. The university would then have additional time to raise another \$200 million to reach its goal of having \$1 billion to conduct cancer research.

OHSU's plan is to build on Dr. Brian Druker's ground-breaking work developing the molecularly targeted cancer therapy called Gleevec. Druker proposes to populate the labs with world-class researchers who will have the funding to allow them to focus on science rather than writing grant proposals. The researchers would focus on finding faster, smarter ways to detect and treat cancer before it becomes deadly.

"The Knight Institute would be able to attract the leading researchers in the world to Oregon. Their research would have the potential to save millions of lives," said Courtney. "Oregon can be the place where we end cancer as we know it."

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