



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

November 21, 2013

COURTNEY SUPPORTS \$1 BILLION CHALLENGE FOR CANCER RESEARCH AT OHSU

(SALEM) – Senate President Peter Courtney Thursday backed a proposal that would make the Knight Cancer Institute at Oregon Health and Science University the leading cancer research center in the world.

The state, he said, should invest in Knight Institute Director Dr. Brian Druker's vision for a historic research effort to develop a cure for cancer.

“When your doctor says that you have cancer, you will always, from that day forward, live in fear,” Courtney said. “We have a chance to invest in an effort that could change that for future generations. Our children and grandchildren may not have to live with that fear the way we have.”

The Senate President said he favors a plan for the state to sell \$200 million in bonds to help OHSU match a \$500 million pledge made by Nike co-founder Phil Knight and his wife Penny in September. As part of the Knights' pledge, OHSU has two years to raise the matching funds, which would give the institution \$1 billion for its effort to develop a cure for cancer.

OHSU President Dr. Joe Robertson and Knight Cancer Institute Director Dr. Brian Druker explained the need to have world-class facilities in which to conduct cancer research in a meeting Wednesday. The approximately \$200 million would be used to build facilities at OHSU where research and clinical trials would be conducted.

Given the limited window of opportunity to achieve this historic investment in cancer research, lawmakers should take up the plan in the 2014 session which convenes February 3, the Senate President said.

Druker's vision builds on his ground-breaking work developing the molecularly targeted cancer therapy called Gleevec. He is proposing to populate the labs with world-class researchers who have the funding that allows 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," Courtney said. "Oregon school children are already raising money for this challenge. Their state should join them."