

**Testimony Before the House Committee on Health and Human Services
Presentation by Roy Jensen, M.D.
Director, KU Cancer Center**

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Roy Jensen and it is my privilege to serve as the Director of KU Cancer Center and the Kansas Masonic Cancer Research Institute at the University of Kansas Medical.

The KU Cancer Center and our partners are dedicated to ending suffering and death from cancer. Each day we work to understand how cancer develops and what we can do to prevent it. We work to improve the lives of those living with this disease and to support them and their families as they battle this terrible plague on humanity.

Our Chancellor, Dr. Robert Hemenway, has declared our work to be the university's top priority. In doing so he affirmed the value of basic research, developing therapies, of preventing and controlling cancer and of providing access to the best possible cancer care.

Cancer research is a tremendous intellectual challenge. But we pursue this work because like all of you we have lost friends and loved ones to cancer. Yes, cancer research is about genes and proteins and cells in a Petri dish, but when it is all said and done—our work is really about people. This work is vitally important because it gives us the chance to find new treatments, therapies and cures and in doing so allows us to extend, enrich and save people's lives. It is that aspect of the work in which we find our greatest satisfaction.

The design of our cancer center is not intended to create a fortress in Kansas City. Instead the heart of our center is designed around an alliance of health care providers from Johnson City to Johnson County, from Sharon Springs to Baxter Springs—and everywhere in between. We want Kansans, no matter where they live, to have access to world-class cancer care. Our center will provide patients with access to clinical trials through the Midwest Cancer Alliance. We will invite hospitals and other health care providers throughout the state to join as a member of this important component of our cancer center.

We also believe that the KU Cancer Center will lead in bioscience innovation. Teaming up with the nationally recognized excellence of the KU School of Pharmacy we are designing a powerhouse for drug discovery and development. These discoveries will seek to enhance treatments and help prevent disease but they will also have significant commercial benefits for the Kansas economy.

If our quest to achieve National Cancer Institute designation for our cancer center is to be successful we will need significant additional resources. The Governor's budget for the

next fiscal year includes a \$5 million appropriation which, if approved, will provide some of the resources we will need to recruit top talent to crucial leadership posts within the center and to attract the best cancer doctors, scientists and researchers to our center. These funds will also be used to help design and deploy our statewide cancer alliance. This annual appropriation is the single most important step this legislature can take in support of the fight against cancer in Kansas. I hope I can count on your support for this appropriation.

A legislative briefing book is attached to this testimony which details the need for a comprehensive cancer center and the benefits to be obtained by investing in one. I would encourage you to review this publication if you wish to know more about our plans.

In addition to state appropriations we will aggressively be seeking support from federal government sources and investments from private donors. Obtaining National Cancer Institute designation is no easy task and the resources required to achieve this goal will be significant.

I am proud of my decision to return to Kansas. I have been welcomed warmly by my colleagues and made many new and valued friends. As I have shared our vision for a cancer center I have been enthusiastically received by legislators from throughout the state. I am impressed by your commitment to the greater good and your interest in helping us achieve something great for the Kansans we serve. I look forward to working with you during this legislative session as we advance the future of cancer care in Kansas and our region.

I encourage any effort you as legislators can take to support the KU Cancer Center and our work to end suffering and death from cancer in Kansas.

Thank you for this opportunity to be with you today and I would be pleased to stand for any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Roy Jensen, M.D.
Director, Kansas Masonic Cancer Research Institute
and The University of Kansas Cancer Center