

Charles (Chuck) Maack participation on Congressionally funded Prostate Cancer Research Funding Panels.

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Congressional Funding Has IMPaCT on Prostate Cancer Research

Consumer reviewers selected are cancer survivors active in advocacy, outreach, or support organization in their local communities.

One of the reviewers, Charles “Chuck” Maack, has been a consumer advocate on prostate cancer panels in 2006 and 2007. A 74-year-old Navy veteran, Mr. Maack underwent radical prostatectomy in 1992, and then radiation for locoregional involvement. Three years later, a rising PSA led to intermittent androgen-deprivation treatment. His PSA today is less than 2.0 ng/mL, but he knows he still has the disease.

Mr. Maack said that when the disease recurred after surgery, he joined the Wichita chapter of the national Us TOO organization because he felt he needed to know

more about prostate cancer. A retired anesthesiologist in the group became his mentor, and as Mr. Maack learned more about the disease, other members started asking him for advice.

(See www.theprostateadvocate.com under “Observations” for articles he has authored, had published, or coauthored with a physician.)

In a phone interview from the meeting in Atlanta, Mr. Maack said that other members of Us TOO recommended him to the DoD program as a possible advocacy representative for the Prostate Cancer Research Program.

“In my first year, 2006, I was assigned to a panel on Cell Biology led by Ramesh Nayak, PhD, of the University of Arizona,” Mr. Maack said. He said he and the panel reviewed 17 grant proposals that year.

In 2007 Mr. Maack was on the Physical Imaging panel, a group that included 17 scientists and three consumer reviewers who reviewed 19 funding proposals.

He said he was initially daunted by the task when the background and review material arrived at his door “in big boxes,” but well before the three-day panel meetings.

“As consumer reviewers and laymen, we're not expected to understand everything that's going on [scientifically],” he said. The advocates' contributions are from what they

have read, from what they've heard at other meetings, and from focusing on the question of how soon a proposed study will make a difference in prostate cancer.

“We get a chance to comment on each proposal, and then the entire panel decides which go on to higher level review panels,” he said.

Mr. Maack said it has been a very positive experience for him to be on these panels and to see how much is being done to fight prostate cancer—“and now I can also appreciate how complicated cancer biology is.”