

FOVAlert: Supplemental Boosts VA Research \$32.5 million

On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), thank you for your continued support of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetics Research program. In recent weeks, FOVA has had much success in its advocacy efforts on the Hill. We write to provide an update on congressional activity and encourage you to contact your members of Congress and urge them to increase VA research funding in fiscal year (FY) 2008 to \$480 million. As congressional momentum in favor of increased support for the VA research program continues to rise, FOVA members must maintain that momentum throughout the appropriations process.

After much debate and negotiation, President George W. Bush signed into law a fiscal year (FY) 2007 supplemental funding bill Friday, May 25, 2007. The bill included an additional \$32.5 million for VA research “related to the unique needs of returning Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans.” Overall, VA fared well in the supplemental, receiving nearly \$1.8 billion in additional funding for medical services, administration, facilities, research, IT and minor construction.

Meanwhile, the US House of Representatives Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee approved Tuesday, May 22, 2007, a draft FY 2008 appropriations bill that includes \$480 million for the VA research program, the same level of funding supported by FOVA. In addition to the direct appropriation level, the bill includes \$2 billion for major and minor VA construction projects. The minor construction account funds improvements to VA research facilities, which are woefully inadequate and underfunded. In recent years, funding for the VA Minor Construction Program has failed to provide the resources needed to maintain, upgrade, and replace aging research facilities. FOVA supports the inclusion of \$45 million in the minor construction account for research facility improvements. The draft bill will move to the full House Appropriations Committee after the Memorial Day recess. Senate consideration of its appropriations bill will likely occur at the end of the summer.

Please feel free to contact the following members of the FOVA Executive Committee with questions about the supplemental bill, the House subcommittee markup of the FY 2008 VA appropriation bill, or FOVA’s support of a \$480 million appropriation. FOVA’s FY 2008 budget recommendation is attached to this email for your review and reference.

Sincerely,

Charlie Clayton
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
(202) 861-9351
cclayton@im.org

Gary Ewart
American Thoracic Society
(202) 785-3355
gewart@lungusadc.org

Heather Kelly, PhD
American Psychological Association
(202) 336-5932
hkelly@apa.org

Matthew Shick
Association of American Medical Colleges
(202) 828-0525
mshick@aamc.org

