

FOVAlert: Congress Moves VA Appropriations

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.

The US House of Representatives passed (409-2) the “Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2008” ([H.R. 2642](#)) Friday, June 15, 2007. The bill provides \$36.6 billion for VA Medical Care, a \$4.5 billion, or 14 percent, increase over the fiscal year (FY) 2007 joint funding resolution. For the first time, the total budget for VA health care exceeds (by \$294 million) the recommendation sponsored by the veterans service organizations in the *Independent Budget* and supported by FOVA. **Consistent with FOVA’s FY 2008 recommendations, the House measure also provides \$480 million for VA Medical and Prosthetic Research, an increase of \$66.3 million (16 percent) over the FY 2007 joint funding resolution.**

Though the bill provides a significant increase for the VA minor construction account, it does not dedicate any portion of these funds for VA research facility renovation. For FY 2008, FOVA recommends “a steady stream of resources dedicated to renovating existing research facilities—starting with an additional \$45 million under the minor construction account—and major construction funding sufficient to replace at least one outdated facility per year until the backlog is addressed.”

Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved (28-1) its version of the VA appropriations bill Thursday, June 14, 2007. The Senate measure provides the same increase for VA Medical Care as the House bill, but includes \$500 million for VA research, an \$86.3 million (21 percent) increase over the FY 2007 joint funding resolution.

Please contact your members of Congress to thank them for the significant increases to the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program budget in FY 2008. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chair Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) and Ranking Member Larry Craig (R-Idaho) deserve special thanks for their letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee (attached), which urges increased funding for VA research

Again, thanks. Please feel free to contact the following members of the FOVA Executive Committee with questions about the appropriations process or the VA research program.

Sincerely,

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