

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2018

Senator Jerry Moran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Senator Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Schatz:

We urge the United States Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies to uphold its commitment to our nation's veterans by providing at least \$779 million in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 appropriation for the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research.

VA's Office of Research and Development serves as the nation's only health research program focused exclusively on the needs of veterans. Since the first VA research program was established in 1925, VA's seminal research has studied the treatments of conditions that most commonly afflict our veterans and service members, while also developing new technologies that have led to health care improvements for all Americans.

With a history of ground-breaking innovations and a litany of award-winning projects, VA research and development programs are especially poised to foster excellence in research and patient care, utilizing nationwide partnerships to leverage federal investments and spend limited dollars wisely. In addition, because the majority of VA researchers also serve as clinicians caring for patients, critical medical research findings more readily translate into clinically relevant diagnostics and treatment modalities.

Robust funding for VA Medical and Prosthetic Research will be especially important in FY 2019 to meet our veterans' mental health concerns as suicide rates soar, address chronic pain amidst a nationwide opioid epidemic, improve women veterans' health, and engineer methods to improve the lives of veterans who have lost limbs or suffer from spinal cord injuries. VA research also seeks to expand use of the Million Veteran Program (MVP), to discover how genomic variation influences the progression of diseases and response to different treatments, informing research and efforts to improve health care for generations to come. As of October 2017, MVP had enrolled more than 612,000 veterans, and MVP researchers have already completed initial analyses of genetic data and studies on post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and Gulf War illness.

We ask you to appropriate at least \$779 million for VA Medical and Prosthetic Research for FY 2019, an amount that reflects five percent real growth over FY 2018, in order to continue fostering a health care system for our nation's veterans that is innovative and effective. Such an allocation will build upon an exemplary record of success and allow the VA to keep pace with

inflation, sustain existing research and development commitments, and pursue critical new initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



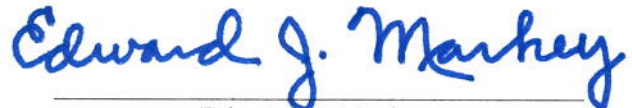
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



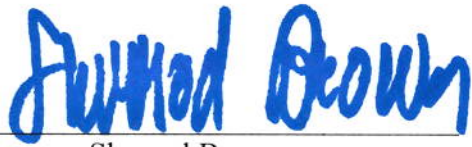
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



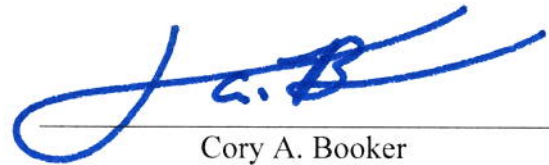
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



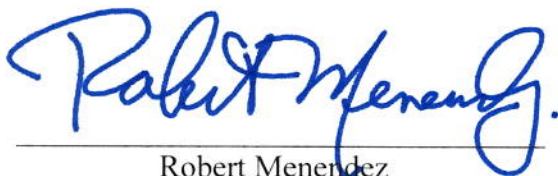
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Coons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and the last name "Coons" written in a similar style.

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator