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May 6, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chair  
Committee on Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Takano  
Chair  
Committee on Veterans Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Phil Roe, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Moran and Takano and Ranking Members Tester and Roe:

On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), we thank you for your ongoing efforts to combat Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). As you consider additional opportunities to support the nation and its veterans through future emergency supplemental legislation, we urge the inclusion of a provision that research conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under the Medical and Prosthetic Research program be exempt from Paperwork Reduction Act requirements.

FOVA is appreciative of the recent funding increases Congress has provided for the VA research program, allowing VA to expand and excel in developing innovative treatments and diagnostics and to use cutting edge technology to care for veterans. VA clinicians and researchers are now on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic by caring for patients, conducting clinical trials, and investigating mechanisms of coronavirus infection and disease progression.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255) exempted research funded by the National Institutes of Health from Paperwork Reduction Act requirements, allowing researchers to more easily conduct surveys with volunteer participants. Unfortunately, VA researchers are still subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act, which has prevented timely responses to emerging health concerns and turned researchers away from conducting studies due to the months-long timeline for the Office of Management and Budget to review and approve research surveys. During the current pandemic, VA researchers are missing out on critical opportunities to investigate COVID-19 progression and recovery in real-time because of Paperwork Reduction Act requirements.

To ensure that VA research efforts are not delayed during this critical time and to promote timely data collection in the future, FOVA urges Congress to permanently exempt the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program from the Paperwork Reduction Act requirements.

Sincerely,  
The FOVA Executive Committee