

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
HT-2 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Carter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
HVC-227, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Carter:

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the health and well-being of our nation's veterans. Congress has long understood the relationship between robust research into the health care needs of our veterans and improved outcomes in treatment and care. For this reason, we respectfully request a funding level of \$860 million for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research program within the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

The VA Research and Development (R&D) program plays a key role in advancing the health and care of Veterans and is uniquely positioned to continue to lead a national transformation of American health care. As part of the largest integrated health care system in the United States, VA R&D is superbly placed to study the causes and most effective treatments of the conditions that most commonly afflict our service members and veterans.

Currently, VA researchers are studying preventions and treatments for some of the most devastating mental and physical health issues affecting veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), traumatic amputation, sensory dysfunction and loss, and polytrauma. The VA is assessing the impact of military sexual trauma (MST) on both men and women veterans, researching substance use disorders, and measuring the impact of the ongoing Program of Comprehensive Assistance for VA Family Caregivers on the health of both veterans and their caregivers. VA's research also focuses on continuing care across a veteran's entire life span, studying causes and treatments of various cancers with cutting-edge personalized medicine approaches, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), chronic pain, and Gulf War illnesses.

Let us work together to support VA researchers and foster a health care system for our nation's veterans that is as innovative and effective as they are. We urge you to provide a meaningful investment of \$860 million for the VA's Medical and Prosthetic Research Program for the coming fiscal year.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on behalf of our veterans.



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress