



FOVA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Roscoe Butler
Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gary Ewart
American Thoracic Society

Emily Holubowich, MPP
American Heart Association

Joy Ilem
Disabled American Veterans

Rick Starrs, MBA
National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations

Christa Wagner, PhD
Association of American Medical Colleges

Jennifer Zeitzer
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

September 3, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representative

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), we thank you for your committees' proposed increases for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research program in fiscal year (FY) 2022. We write to urge swift enactment of the House-passed FY 2022 appropriation of \$904 million for the VA research program before Sept. 30, 2021, to ensure continuation of the best medical research and clinical care for our veterans.

If FY 2022 funding is not approved before the start of the fiscal year, the research program will likely face short-term funding through a continuing resolution (CR). This "stopgap" measure would keep funding at FY 2021 levels for the length of the CR, which fails to keep pace with biomedical inflation and would impede VA research in all priority areas, including preventing veteran suicide, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, precision oncology, COVID-19, and other conditions with increased incidences in veterans. The associated uncertainty and delay in enacting FY 2022 funding jeopardizes VA's ability to enter into long-term research commitments and slows the translation of research findings into high-quality, timely health care services for veterans. In addition, the impacts of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic on researchers, including at the VA, and the patients who benefit from their findings, will reverberate for years to come. Increased investments in the VA research program as soon as possible are critical to maintain previous commitments and to support research recovery.

FOVA is appreciative of funding increases Congress has provided for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program in recent years, allowing VA to expand and excel in developing innovative treatments and diagnostics and to use cutting edge technology to care for veterans. We are also grateful for the House-passed funding level of \$904 million for the VA research program for FY 2022, a funding level similar to [the request of Senator Durbin and colleagues](#). We hope the final spending bill will reflect this continued commitment to the VA research program at this critical time.

We urge Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to finalize and implement a meaningful increase in VA research for FY 2022 before Sept. 30, 2021, so veteran-centric research can continue without interruption. We look forward to working with you towards this goal.

Sincerely,
The FOVA Executive Committee

Over 30 years ago, the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) coalition was founded to ensure that America's veterans receive high-quality health care. Today, FOVA is a diverse coalition representing nearly 100 national academic, medical, and scientific societies; voluntary health and patient advocacy groups; and veteran-focused associations. FOVA organizations work in concert with the Independent Budget veterans service organizations to advocate for continued, necessary funding for the research and health programs that serve the nation's veterans.

CC:

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable John Carter, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies