

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5400

April 28th, 2021

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

The Honorable John Carter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Carter:

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring 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 \$902 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 2022.

The VA Office of Research and Development 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 Research and Development has the access needed to study the causes and most effective treatments of conditions commonly afflicting our servicemembers and veterans.

In all instances, VA research seeks to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our nation's veterans and endeavors to extend their life expectancy. In FY2020, VA research projects included studies into: the treatment of prolonged grief disorder in combat veterans; the impacts of VA Specialty Care Resource Hubs; improving outcomes for veterans with Chronic Kidney Disease and heart failure; and the interaction of stress and mild traumatic brain injuries. VA Research and Development also funded clinical trials for experimental treatments for bone regeneration and spinal cord injuries. Prosthetic research studies included those that sought to improve lower limbs, foot, and ankle prosthetics and to better understand the unique challenges faced by women using prosthetics.

VA research has also played an important role in combatting COVID-19, since more than 50 VA medical centers participated in COVID-19 clinical trials. The VA Coronavirus Research and Efficacy Studies (CURES) program examined the effects of convalescent plasma on veterans hospitalized with COVID-19. Other VA research studied the effectiveness of telemedicine and whether degarelix, a therapy for prostate cancer, may be a suitable treatment for men with COVID-19.

It is imperative that Congress demonstrates a clear commitment to VA research and encourages 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 \$902 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 American veterans.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Gonzalez-Colón
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Abigail Spanberger
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress

Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
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Bobby L. Rush
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Darren Soto
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Carolyn Bourdeaux
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Donald M. Payne, Jr,
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Jan Schakowsky
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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James McNerney
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Elissa Slotkin
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
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Jim Himes
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Jahana Hayes
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Jimmy Pannetta
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Jake Auchinloss
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
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Mike Thompson
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Mark Takano
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.
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