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 $980 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 2023.

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.

VA research seeks to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our nation’s veterans and endeavors to extend their life expectancy. In FY 2021, 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. These novel treatments and diagnostics do not just benefit our country’s veterans however, they benefit all Americans who suffer from complex disease processes.
VA research continues to play an important role in combatting COVID-19, since nearly 70 VA medical centers are participating 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, and other potential treatments. Other VA research studied the mental health impacts of COVID-19 by utilizing telemental health services.

The President’s Budget request for VA research this year is $916 million, plus an additional $30 million of anticipated American Rescue Plan Act funds. This request does not fully account for biomedical research and development price inflation and would limit research potential at the same time our country is adapting to COVID variants and struggling with burgeoning rates of mental health disease. Increasing the President’s funding by $36 million would ensure that the VA can maintain cutting-edge research programs that benefit not just America’s veterans, but all people who suffer from complex diseases.

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 $980 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 González-Colón  
Member of Congress

Elaine G. Luria  
Member of Congress

Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress

Mike Levin  
Member of Congress
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

Antonio Delgado  
Member of Congress

Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Sean Casten  
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress
Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress
James A. Himes  
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch  
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Tony Cárdenas  
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Albio Sires  
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Mike Thompson  
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Vicente Gonzalez  
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
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Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress