

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

[[DATE]]

Senator Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Senator John Boozman
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Boozman:

We write to request that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies supports at least \$980 million in funding for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

Nearly 100 years ago, the VA's Medical and Prosthetic Research Program was created to focus on the specialized health care needs of our nation's veterans. It remains the only federal research program focused on veterans and has grown to address the most pressing concerns for the veteran community, such as homelessness, traumatic brain injury, prosthetics, and mental health conditions. The researchers in the VA research program have made incredible progress in a number of fields, including precision oncology, in collaboration with other federal agencies and research institutions. For example, VA partners with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to ensure veterans have access to new therapies and high-quality clinical trials to treat their cancer. Through collaborations such as these and others with universities and research centers, VA research supports more than 7,000 studies across the country each year to gain insight on conditions that affect veterans the most to ultimately lead to cutting-edge therapeutics and cures.

VA medical research is not isolated in its role in improving veterans' healthcare and wellbeing. The *PACT Act* (P.L. 117-168) was a landmark bipartisan effort that came together through the ardent advocacy of veterans' service organizations who recognized the need to address toxic exposure among veterans. Beyond giving toxic exposed-veterans access to care now, the *PACT Act* also directs the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program to focus on toxic exposure research and collaborate with other federal research agencies on this work. This illustrates the indispensable role VA medical research plays in providing care for our veterans. Strong funding for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program will ensure the VA can fully implement the *PACT Act* as Congress intended and overall improve VA's ability to treat toxic-exposed veterans in the future.

To allow VA medical researchers to continue building upon their work and collaborating with outside partners, investment also need to go toward modernizing its research facilities and information technology systems. The Applied Proteogenomics Organizational Learning and Outcomes (APOLLO) network is a partnership between VA, the Department of Defense, and the NCI to translate real-world data into better clinical care for Veterans and active-duty service

members with cancer. The ability to share data is critical to continue valuable partnerships like APOLLO.

Funding the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program is a worthy investment for our veterans, but all Americans will benefit from the advancements in treatments and even cures for numerous conditions. The VA's Precision Oncology Program works on service-connected cancers that also are common in civilians, such as lung cancer and breast cancer. Building upon previous years' robust funding will help ensure its groundbreaking research reaches even more people.

VA medical research is an important part of our commitment to provide the best quality of care for our veterans. We urge the subcommittee to invest at least \$980 million in funding for VA medical research in FY 2024.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

[[CLOSING]]

[[SIGNATURES]]