

FOVA

Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research

Executive Committee

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June 21, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), we respectfully urge you to adopt the Senate-passed Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research appropriation of \$675 million for FY 2017. While this amount falls short of the \$740 million recommended by FOVA, it will help offset the reprioritization of designated VA research areas caused by chronic underfunding and new budget stressors.

FOVA appreciates that report language accompanying the House bill calls for additional research specifically related to PTSD, respiratory diseases, innovative treatments, stroke research, exoskeleton research, canine therapy, sleep research, intergenerational effects of toxic exposure, prosthetics for females, colorectal cancer research, Alzheimer's disease, and antimalarial medications. However, at the House-approved funding level, the Administration's congressional budget justification identifies the following designated research areas for cuts in FY 2017:

Aging	Heart Disease/Cardiovascular Health
Autoimmune Disorders	Infectious Diseases
Central Nervous System	Kidney Disorders
Bone/Joint Degenerative Diseases	Lung Disorders
Dementia & Neuronal Degeneration	Environmental Exposures
Diabetes & Major Complications	Other Chronic Diseases
Digestive Diseases	Prosthetics
Emerging Pathogens/Bio-Terrorism	Sensory Loss
Gulf War Veterans Illness	Special Populations
Health Systems	Substance Abuse

Both Mental Illness and Acute/Traumatic Injury designated research areas are level-funded.

FOVA recognizes that the VA is uniquely positioned to advance genomic medicine through the Million Veteran Program (MVP). When completed, MVP will constitute one of the largest genetic repositories in existence, offering tremendous potential to study the health of veterans. To date, the VA is nearly halfway to its goal of collecting genetic samples and health information from 1 million veterans. While FOVA supports the President's Precision Medicine Initiative and the \$65 million requested for MVP in FY 2017, we believe this program should not impede other critical VA research.

FOVA was founded over 30 years ago to ensure that America's veterans receive high-quality health care. Today, FOVA is a diverse coalition representing national academic, medical, and scientific societies; voluntary health and patient advocacy groups; and veteran-focused associations. FOVA works in concert with the *Independent Budget* veterans service organizations.

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Despite the documented success of VA investigators across many fields, appropriated funding for VA research has lagged far behind annual biomedical research inflation, resulting in a net loss of nearly 5 percent of the program's overall purchasing power since 2010. FOVA believes additional resources are necessary to expand research on emerging conditions prevalent among newer veterans, as well as to continue the VA's inquiries into chronic conditions of aging veterans from previous wartime periods.

Thank you for your continued support of VA research. We hope the impact of VA research funding shortfalls outlined above demonstrates the need for at least the Senate's \$675 million VA Medical and Prosthetic Research appropriation. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues next year to secure full-funding for MVP, without reducing other veteran research priorities.

Sincerely,

The FOVA Executive Committee
on behalf of

FY 2017 FOVA Endorsers

AcademyHealth	American Optometric Association
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM)	American Pain Society
Alliance for Aging Research	American Physiological Society
American Academy of Neurology	American Podiatric Medical Association
American Academy of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine	American Psychiatric Association
American Academy of Ophthalmology	American Psychological Association
American Academy of Pain Medicine	American Society for Bone and Mineral Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases	American Society for Investigative Pathology
American Association of Anatomists	American Society of Nephrology
American Association of Colleges of Nursing	American Thoracic Society
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine	Arthritis Foundation
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy	Association for Clinical and Translational Science
American Association of Neurological Surgeons	Association of Academic Physiatrists
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)	Association of American Medical Colleges
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons	Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
American College of Clinical Pharmacology	Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine	Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists
American Federation for Medical Research	Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A., Inc.
American Gastroenterological Association	Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
American Heart Association	Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
American Liver Foundation	Congress of Neurological Surgeons
American Lung Association	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
American Military Retirees Association (AMRA)	Digestive Disease National Coalition
	Disabled American Veterans
	Disabled Sports USA
	Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
	Endocrine Society

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FAIR Foundation
Federation of American Societies for Experimental
Biology
GBS|CIDP Foundation International
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.
International Foundation for Functional
Gastrointestinal Disorders
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Men's Health Network
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alopecia Areata Foundation
National Association for the Advancement of
Orthotics and Prosthetics
National Association for Uniformed Services
National Association of VA Dermatologists
National Association of Veterans' Research and
Education Foundations

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
NephCure Kidney International
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Paralyzed Veterans of America Spinal Cord
Research Foundation
Parkinson's Action Network
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Research Society on Alcoholism
Scleroderma Foundation
Sleep Research Society
Society for Investigative Dermatology
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Military Widows
The Clinical Research Forum
The Marfan Foundation
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Cc: House and Senate members of the FY 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related
Agencies Appropriations Bill conference committee