



May 21, 2020

The Honorable John Boozman
Chair
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chair
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable John Carter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Boozman, Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz, and Ranking Members Schatz and Carter:

The Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) thanks you for your support of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Program and your recent efforts to support the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic. As your subcommittees work to consider additional opportunities to support veterans through future COVID-19 emergency supplemental legislation, we urge at least \$50 million in supplemental funding for VA research to support COVID-19 research efforts and sustain the momentum of the entire VA research enterprise.

FOVA was founded over 30 years ago to ensure that America's veterans receive high-quality health care supported by veteran-centric research. Today, FOVA is a diverse coalition representing nearly 100 national academic, medical, and scientific societies; health and patient advocacy groups; and veteran-focused associations.

FOVA is appreciative of Congress's recent investments to support veteran-centric research. While the fiscal year (FY) 2020 enacted level would have continued this investment and covered the cost of biomedical inflation, the FY 2020 appropriations bill also included \$50 million in rescissions from the Medical and Prosthetic Research Program. This rescission not only impedes VA research in all priority areas, including veteran suicide prevention, chronic pain, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but is also especially detrimental coming just months before the nation began its fight against the relentless coronavirus pandemic. In FY 2021, the nearly 100 undersigned organizations support a funding recommendation of \$860 million for VA research, to restore the investment in veteran-centric research to a trajectory of meaningful growth above inflation and renewed investment in groundbreaking medical research.

To address immediate and unexpected COVID-19-related impacts, we recommend at least an additional \$50 million for the VA research program through future COVID-19 supplemental funding bills to support new VA research projects and clinical trials designed specifically to address the effects of COVID-19 on the veteran population. With nearly 13,000 documented COVID-19 cases to date, it is critical that the VA

research program is equipped to support front line research efforts to protect a veteran population that is disproportionately older and suffers from preexisting conditions.

With the pandemic continuing to progress, we urge appropriators to provide at least an additional \$50 million in supplemental funding to directly support VA's COVID-19 response efforts and maintain a robust budget trajectory for VA research in FY 2021 to support continued momentum of all research efforts. We look forward to working with you towards this goal.

Sincerely,

FOVA FY 2021 Recommendation Endorsing Organizations (96)

Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health
AcademyHealth
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Pain Medicine
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association for Anatomy
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training
American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodagnostic Medicine
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Brain Coalition
American College of Academic Addiction Medicine
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Radiology
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Dental Education Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Heart Association
American Liver Foundation
American Massage Therapy Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Orthopaedic Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Physiological Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society of Nephrology
American Spinal Injury Association
American Surgical Association

American Thoracic Society
American Tinnitus Association
American Urological Association
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Arthritis Foundation
Associated Medical Schools of New York
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Bioethics Program Directors
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology
Association of Medical and Graduate Departments of Biochemistry
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Pathology Chairs
Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers
Association of University Professors of Neurology
Association of VA Hematology/Oncology
Association of VA Psychologist Leaders
Association of University Anesthesiologists
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists
Blinded Veterans Association
Catholic War Veterans
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Disabled American Veterans
Dystonia Advocacy Network
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
Endocrine Society
Epilepsy Foundation
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
GBS|CIDP Foundation International
International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders
Interstitial Cystitis Association
LUNGeivity Foundation
Lymphatic Education Research Network
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Biomedical Research
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations
NephCure Kidney International
New York State Academic Dental Centers
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Polish Legion of American Veterans
Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation

Scleroderma Foundation
Sleep Research Society
Society for Neuroscience
Society of Academic Associations of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine
Society of General Internal Medicine
The Marfan Foundation
Veterans Health Council of Vietnam Veterans of America
Veterans of Foreign Wars
VeteransAgainstAlzheimer's
Vietnam Veterans of America