



November 22, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Leahy, and Vice Chairman Shelby:

Thank you for your dedication to the health of our nation's veterans through your previous support of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research program. On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) coalition, we write to urge swift enactment of a fiscal year (FY) 2023 omnibus appropriations bill to ensure continuation of the best medical research and clinical care for our veterans. 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 nearly 80 national academic, medical, and scientific societies; voluntary health and patient advocacy groups; and veteran-focused associations that work in concert with the Independent Budget veterans service organizations to advocate for continued, necessary funding for the research and health programs that serve the nation's veterans.

FOVA is appreciative of the bipartisan funding increases Congress has provided for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program in recent years, allowing VA to expand and excel in developing innovative treatments and diagnostics and to use cutting edge technology to care for veterans. To continue this momentum, **we urge that any final FY 2023 appropriations package include at least the House-passed recommendation of \$926 million for the VA research program and as close as possible to [FOVA's FY 2023 recommendation](#) of \$980 million.**

A meaningful funding increase in FY 2023 for the VA research program would enhance the investment in veteran-centric research on a trajectory of meaningful growth above inflation, allowing for sustained support for efforts to address long-term health impacts of COVID-19, health disparities, and increase clinical trials access, while renewing support for groundbreaking programs like the Million Veteran Program (MVP), VA's participation in the Cancer Moonshot Initiative, and research on chronic and emerging needs of our nation's veterans. Increased funding for the VA research program will also support researchers as they recover from slowed research progress during the pandemic and allow for additional investments to support the strained IT capacity through computational science purchases to enhance the collection and use of big data. Sustained and predictable funding growth for VA research is imperative to help ensure the best return on investment in improving the health of veterans and all Americans.

The current continuing resolution, which keeps funding at FY 2022 levels, fails to keep pace with biomedical inflation and impedes VA research in all priority areas, including preventing veteran suicide, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, precision oncology, and other conditions with increased incidences in veterans. The associated uncertainty and delay in enacting FY 2023 funding jeopardizes VA's ability to enter into long-term research commitments and slows the translation of research findings into high-quality, timely

health care services for veterans. Increased investments in the VA research program as soon as possible are critical to maintain previous commitments and to support research recovery.

We urge Congress to again work in a bipartisan manner to finalize and implement a meaningful increase reflected in a minimum \$926 million appropriation for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research program for FY 2023 as quickly as possible, so veteran-centric research can continue without further interruption. We look forward to working with you towards this goal.

Sincerely,

The FOVA Executive Committee

Roscoe Butler
Paralyzed Veterans of America

John Laughner
American Heart Association

Gary Ewart
American Thoracic Society

Christa Wagner, PhD
Association of American Medical Colleges

Marlon Ferguson
National Association of Veterans Research and
Education Foundations

Jennifer Zeitzer
Federation of American Societies for Experimental
Biology

Joy Ilem
Disabled American Veterans

cc:

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate