

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2021

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Calvert:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations process, we write to respectfully request that you continue supporting valuable medical research conducted by the Department of Defense (DOD) through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP). The initiatives under the CDMRP are critical to advancing our understanding of a variety of health issues and have a proven track record of contributing to medical breakthroughs. They deserve Congress's continuing support.

The CDMRP plays a unique role in the medical research community, investing in high-risk, high-reward research through a peer review system that also incorporates feedback from patient advocates. The research is both innovative and successful. Much of the research conducted is particularly relevant to the military community, such as studies of diseases that occur in higher numbers among veterans, and diseases or injuries whose treatments may also be applicable to wounded service members. For example, grants from the CDMRP have been used to support research into:

- Neurological diseases such as ALS and multiple sclerosis that have higher rates of incidence among veterans. One such grant funded research into induced pluripotent stem cells derived from human skin to determine if there is the potential for therapeutic benefit of autologous stem-cell transplantation for ALS patients. Another grant developed a new test to measure sensorimotor function changes for patients with multiple sclerosis. This can identify and track progressive multiple sclerosis to allow for early treatment.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and how to identify it early. One CDMRP-funded grant was used to identify promising biomarkers that may help with early diagnosis of PTSD, and with developing novel treatments.
- Alternatives to opioids. The Peer Reviewed Orthopaedic Research Program developed an FDA-cleared peripheral nerve stimulation device that can serve as an alternative to opioids to reduce post-amputation pain.

- Improvements to medical training. A CDMRP-funded grant went to a project seeking to develop a “machine vision tool” that captures the movements of expert medical personnel and uses them as a comparison with military trainees during exercises. The Investigating Methods for Performance Overdrive (IMPROVE) project is meant to allow for a detailed assessment of the performance of trainees when they provide care requiring precise hand movements or physical orientations.
- Rare diseases like scleroderma, a disease that affects connective tissue, and tuberous sclerosis complex, a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow in many parts of the body. The research into scleroderma is conducted to understand how our skin works, and may help to develop methods of skin regeneration that could also be used for burn victims. The research into tuberous sclerosis complex has improved our understanding of other conditions and injuries, such as traumatic brain injury and diabetes.
- Different cancers. The Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program, a subset of the CDMRP, focuses on cancers that occur more frequently in service-members and veterans, such as melanoma. Other programs within the CDMRP focus on kidney cancer, ovarian cancer, breast cancer and prostate cancer.
- Autism. A child with an autism spectrum disorder needs specialized care that may not be available to military families everywhere they are stationed; one grant supported research into remote treatment through web-based technology, such as webcams. Another grant supported the development of technology that, when paired with smart glasses, can be used to improve social-emotional skills for young adults transitioning to employment.

Members of Congress have traditionally supported a wide variety of programs within the CDMRP, each with its own merits. While we all recognize the challenges facing your Committee in this difficult budget climate, we urge you to continue your support for the programs within the CDMRP.

Sincerely,



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/
Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
Member of Congress

/s/
Victoria Spartz
Member of Congress

/s/
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

/s/
Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

/s/
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

/s/
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/
William R. Keating
Member of Congress

/s/
Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

/s/
Sean Casten
Member of Congress

/s/
Kaiali'i Kahele
Member of Congress

/s/
Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress

/s/
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

/s/
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

/s/
Ken Buck
Member of Congress

/s/
Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

/s/
Albio Sires
Member of Congress

/s/
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

/s/
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

/s/
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

/s/
Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s/
Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

/s/
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter Welch
Member of Congress

/s/
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

/s/
Bill Posey
Member of Congress

/s/
David B. McKinley P.E.
Member of Congress

/s/
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

/s/
Angie Craig
Member of Congress

/s/
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

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Ron Kind
Member of Congress

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Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

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Bruce Westerman
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Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress

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Darren Soto
Member of Congress

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Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

/s/
André Carson
Member of Congress

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Jim Costa
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Tony Cárdenas
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Jim Hagedorn
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Tom Emmer
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Sharice L. Davids
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Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

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Ro Khanna
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Carolyn Bourdeaux
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/s/
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

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Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

/s/
Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress