

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2024

Senator Kyrsten Sinema
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 Sinema and Ranking Member Boozman:

We write to request that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies support \$1.05 billion in funding for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

The VA's Medical Research and Prosthetic Program fulfills an important role in keeping our promise to care for our nation's veterans. It remains the only federal research program focused on veterans and has grown over the years to address emerging and pressing concerns for the veteran community, such as homelessness, traumatic brain injury, prosthetics, and mental health conditions. As the needs for veterans evolve, VA medical research can foster the development of innovative ways to deliver the best care for veterans.

The VA Medical Research Program offers many opportunities for collaboration between VA researchers and researchers at outside institutions since much VA research also has civilian applications. Through collaborations with other federal agencies, leading 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 develop cutting-edge therapeutics and cures. To allow VA medical researchers to continue building upon their work and collaborating with outside partners, investments also are needed to modernize research facilities and information technology systems.

For example, the Applied Proteogenomic 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 vital to continue valuable partnerships like APOLLO. It is critical to ensure robust support to the program to give researchers the stability to pursue their research into medical discoveries that can change the lives of veterans, their families, and Americans at large.

The veteran population has become more diverse since the inception of the VA Medical Research Program. Women veterans are the fastest growing group in the veteran population and are expected to comprise 18 percent of the veteran population by 2040, a 14 percent increase from the year 2000. Women veterans also are more racially and ethnically diverse, with 43 percent of women veterans belonging to a racial or ethnic minority group. Strong funding for the

VA Medical Research Program will continue to advance the VA Women’s Health Practice Based Research Network, which has been a leader in advancing not only women veterans’ health, but health for all women, with key partners such as the National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women’s Health. The network has supported important advancements in novel approaches to welcoming, including, and supporting women in clinical trials. In addition, in March, President Biden announced a whole-of-government effort to address women’s health, including a Women’s Health Research collaborative between the Department of Defense and the VA. This partnership will explore opportunities to advance women’s health research, close research gaps, and improve evidence-based care for service members and veterans.

Providing support for the VA Medical Research Program can not only address the evolving needs of the veteran community, but also benefit all Americans. For example, 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.

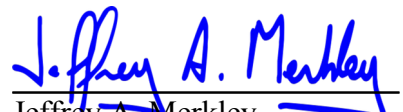
Strong funding for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program is a worthy investment for our veterans, and all Americans will benefit from the advancements in treatments—and even cures—for numerous conditions. We urge the subcommittee to strongly support \$1.05 billion for VA medical research in FY 2025.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



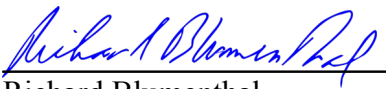
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



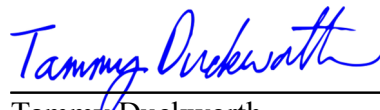
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



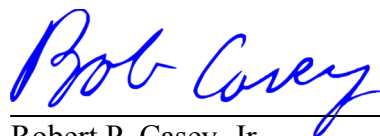
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



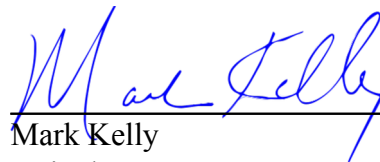
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



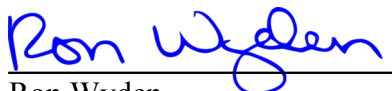
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



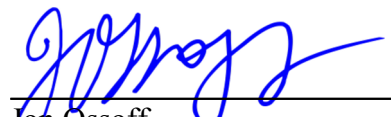
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



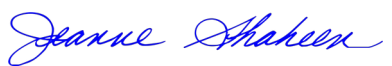
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



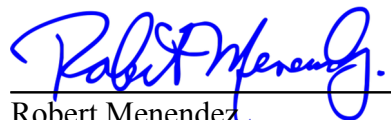
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



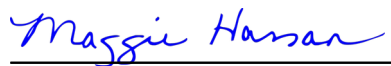
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



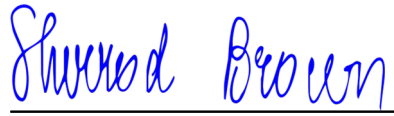
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



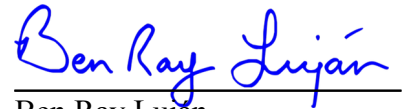
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



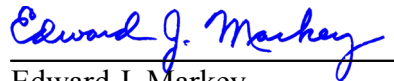
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator