

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol
Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol
Room S-146A
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Cochran:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 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 in veteran populations and diseases or injuries whose treatments may 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. A recent grant is funding 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.
- Traumatic brain injury and eye injuries, which affect both service members and civilians alike. One recent grant is funding the development of a protective eye covering to prevent damage to the corneas of burn victims, which are susceptible to damage if the skin around the eye is damaged.
- Rare diseases like scleroderma, a disease that affects connective tissue. This research is helping us to understand how our skin works, and is being used to develop methods of skin regeneration that could also be used for burn victims.

Members of Congress have traditionally supported a wide variety of programs within the CDMRP. While we all recognize the challenges facing your Committee this year, we urge you to continue your support for the programs within the CDMRP.

Sincerely,

Bob Casey, Jr.

Olympic Smoot

Kirsten G. Gillibrand

Ron Wyden

John J. Kerry

Barbara Boxer

Jim Johnson

Jack Reed
Jon Tester

Frank R. Lautenberg
Al Franken

