June 4, 2019

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<tr>
<th>The Honorable Richard Shelby</th>
<th>The Honorable Richard Durbin</th>
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<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Ranking Member</td>
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<td>Subcommittee on Defense</td>
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<td>U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations</td>
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<td>304 Russell Senate Office Building</td>
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<td>Washington, DC 20510</td>
<td>Washington, DC 2051</td>
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<th>The Honorable Roy Blunt</th>
<th>The Honorable Patty Murray</th>
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Dear Chairmen Shelby and Blunt and Ranking Members Durbin and Murray:

Thank you for your leadership on funding for medical research. On behalf of the lymphatic disease medical research community, we ask that you increase funding and improve coordination on lymphatic disease research, as you work to complete the Senate’s Labor Health and Human Services (LHHS) and Defense appropriations bills for fiscal year (FY) 2020.

Millions of Americans suffer from lymphatic diseases such as lymphedema and lipedema. Lymphatic diseases are associated with a diminished quality of life (QOL) and life-threatening infections. Cancer patients who develop lymphedema incur twice the cost in medical expenses as opposed to survivors who do not develop lymphedema. Treatments are limited, and there is no cure.

Current lymphatic research is leading to clinical applications in the treatment of lymphedema. It is also poised to make a monumental impact on the continuum of lymphatic diseases which includes obesity, diabetes, heart disease, AIDS, Rheumatoid arthritis and cancer metastasis. Recent discoveries point to the potential impact of lymphatic research on Alzheimer’s disease and multiple sclerosis. Success in finding breakthroughs to treat and cure these diseases is inexorably tied to the level of funding investment in this research.

We request your support for expanding and advancing the lymphatic disease research portfolio at the NIH. Further, please also include “lymphatic diseases” as a category eligible for study through the Department of Defense's Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). Lymphatic diseases disproportionately affect active duty service members and first responders, as they often arise from trauma, bacterial infections and as complications of cancer treatment.
Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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