

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-405 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-305 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you begin preparing your fiscal year 2018 Department of Defense appropriations bill, we respectfully request a continuation of funding for the Bone Marrow Failure Disease Research Program.

Bone marrow failure diseases—including aplastic anemia, myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), and paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH)—occur when stem cells inside the bone marrow stop making enough healthy blood cells. These life-threatening, non-contagious diseases can strike any person of any age, of any gender or any race, in any neighborhood anywhere in the world.

Anecdotal data indicate that members of the Armed Forces who were deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan may have been exposed to environmental contaminants associated with these diseases. Though they affect thousands of men, women, and children every year, we still know remarkably little about what causes these diseases, and we know even less about how to neutralize them. Most recently Congress and the Executive Branch announced recognition of the scientific and medical evidence documenting the adverse disease implications for aplastic anemia, leukemia and six other disease conditions created by exposure to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina for service members stationed there between 1953 and 1987.

Thanks to your support, Congress recognizes the urgent need to investigate bone marrow failure disorders. This much-needed funding has given investigators a stable source of support to augment our basic understanding of these diseases. By studying military personnel who have been diagnosed with these disorders, we can gain a much better understanding of what may be causing them. Most important, we can also begin to understand how to protect and treat members of the Armed Forces—and the general public—who contract these life-threatening diseases.

We respectfully urge you to provide a continuation of funding for the Bone Marrow Failure Disease research initiative in fiscal year 2018 through the Defense Department's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to our request.

Sincerely,