

March 27, 2013

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you begin marking up the fiscal year 2014 Defense Appropriations Act, the Arthritis Foundation writes to request that you continue support for the critical, and highly successful, medical research conducted by the Department of Defense (DOD) through the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). **In particular, we support the inclusion of “post traumatic osteoarthritis” and “rheumatoid arthritis” among the listed diseases for available funding.**

The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program plays a unique role in the medical research community with an underlying goal of enhancing the health and well-being of uniformed service personnel, their families, and the veteran population. Our support for the inclusion of “post traumatic osteoarthritis” and “rheumatoid arthritis” is consistent with the overall intent that the CDMRP was established to achieve.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the leading cause of disability and medical discharge in active service members under the age of 40. Active duty soldiers and veterans experience twice the rate of OA when compared to non-military populations. This is largely due to increased rates of joint injury, heavy military packs and the physical stress of training on service members. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) strikes at the peak of one’s career (mid-late thirties/forties) and often leads to early retirement and disability. CDMRP research funding for OA and RA could help identify arthritis prior to the onset of symptoms. This research could help identify medical and physical interventions to prevent or minimize joint damage and slow or stop the arthritis disease process before joints are permanently damaged. Targeted research efforts would focus on examining genetic factors, ways to improve diagnosis, screening, and treatment options.

While other federal agencies support medical research, research at the CDMRP fills a special role by providing peer-reviewed funding for innovative, research that impacts directly the welfare of the American military, their families and the public. The well-executed and efficient programs, within

the CDMRP, demonstrate the government's responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. We hope that Congress will continue its support of research into the areas of "post traumatic osteoarthritis" and "rheumatoid arthritis" at the Department of Defense under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Klippel, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "K".

John H. Klippel, MD
President and CEO