

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2021 defense appropriations bill, we the undersigned respectfully request the Committee appropriate \$12M for Lyme and tickborne disease research in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) at the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). Given the proliferation of Lyme disease throughout the United States with over [300,000 new cases annually](#), many of whom have gone undiagnosed for years, increasing Federal research funding for Lyme and other tickborne diseases is important to develop better diagnostics and cures. As our military invests millions of American taxpayer dollars in the next warfighters on land, sea and air, we need to not only ensure their health and safety from this dreaded disease, but also ensure they have the option of continuing their service for our Country. We are aware of military personnel, including airman and shipman, that have had their military careers cut short by Lyme disease.

This DOD Program for tickborne disease research has been funded steadily at [\\$5M annually Fiscal Year 2016-2019](#), and was increased to [\\$7M in FY2020](#). [During FY2016-18, 138 proposals were submitted for funding and 19 were funded. In FY 2019 alone, 62 proposals were received and 8 or just 13% were funded.](#) We know more research could be funded and appreciate the modest increase this fiscal year to \$7M. We also know that to [develop and commercialize just a single diagnostic can cost between \\$50-75M](#), making CDMRP seed funding vitally important. Yet, it is clear far more Federal funding coupled with private funding is necessary to reach the goal of a reliable diagnostic. Diagnostics are the critical first step to developing a cure so that the researcher can accurately measure if his work is on target or needs adjustment.

The CDMRP plays an important role in the entire Federal research portfolio for tickborne diseases including the most prevalent Lyme, especially with its emphasis on our U.S. Service personnel, their families and our Citizenry. The [CDMRP tickborne disease mission](#) is unmistakable:

“To understand the pathogenesis of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses, to deliver innovation solutions to prevent, diagnose, and treat their manifestations for the benefit of US Service members and American public, and to disseminate this knowledge.”

The Program is unique and effective in its public involvement of the Lyme disease community, from patients to advocates to scientists, who participate jointly in the proposal review and selection to ensure the research brings value to those affected by this often-debilitating disease:

“The Tick-Borne Disease Research Program (TBDRP) was established in fiscal year 2016 (FY16) to support innovative and impactful research that addresses these fundamental issues and gaps in tick-borne diseases. Hallmarks of TBDRP funding include the involvement of Lyme and tick-borne disease advocates in our two-tier review process, as well as the mission of addressing tick-borne diseases as a threat to military forces and their dependents.”

Source: <https://cdmrp.army.mil/tbdrp/default>

We again urge the Committee to increase funding by \$5M for the DOD’s CDMRP for Lyme and tickborne diseases to \$12M in FY2021 Defense Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Center for Lyme Action
[Co-signers]

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin:

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Center for Lyme Action
[Co-signers]