

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Durbin,

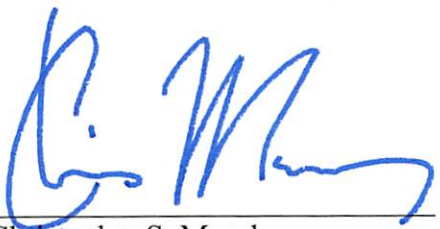
Thank you for your leadership of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and your efforts to improve the health of our nation's military personnel and their families through support of the Department of Defense (DoD) Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). We are writing to request that you continue to include "inflammatory bowel diseases" as a condition eligible for study in the PRMRP in the fiscal year 2020 DoD Appropriations Bill.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, collectively known as inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), are painful and debilitating disorders of the gastrointestinal tract that represent a growing cause of morbidity in active military personnel and veterans. A Department of Veterans Affairs study found that the prevalence of IBD doubled among veterans between 1998 and 2009. More recently, a 2015 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report indicated that the prevalence of IBD in the general population is more than what was previously estimated. Although IBD is diagnosed in people of all ages, most IBD patients are diagnosed in their 20s and 30s – the age range of the vast majority of active duty military personnel. In addition, risk factors common among military service members, such as viral gastroenteritis and stress, increase the likelihood of an individual having IBD.

IBD has been listed in PRMRP since 2008, and researchers consistently compete successfully for funding to study IBD through this program. In recent years, the program has awarded discovery grants to support innovative, high-risk/high-reward research on topics such as the connection between IBD and other diseases and the role that the gut microbiome plays in IBD. Providing continued opportunities for this research will help ensure that we attain a better understanding of how IBD impacts our military personnel, veterans, and other American citizens.

We hope you will include IBD as a condition eligible for study in the DOD PRMRP in FY20. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



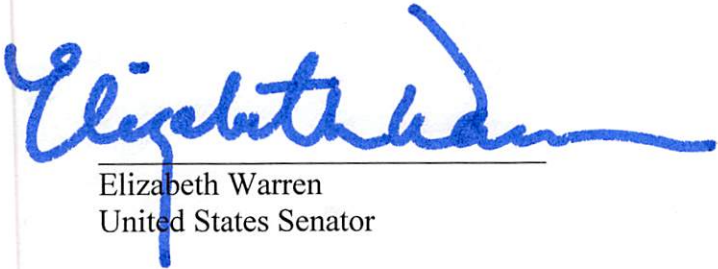
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



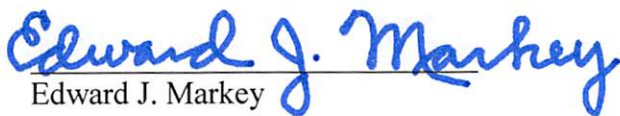
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



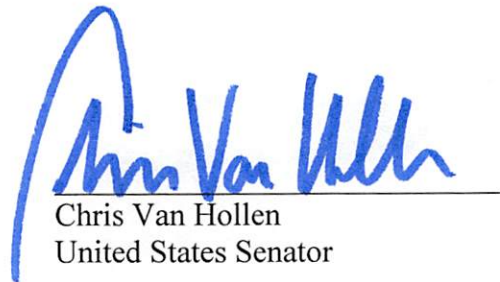
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator