



August 4, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Defense
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Appropriations Chairwoman and Ranking Member Granger and DeLauro, and Defense Subcommittee Chair and Ranking Member Calvert and McCollum:

On behalf of the members of the American College of Rheumatology and the Arthritis Foundation, we are writing to thank you for including funding dedicated to an Arthritis Research Program within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) in the Fiscal Year 2024 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations bill.

As you know, arthritis is the second leading cause of medical discharge from the U.S. Army, following battlefield wounds. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the country and 1 in 3 veterans has doctor-diagnosed arthritis compared to 1 in 4 civilians.

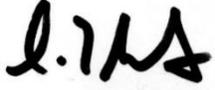
This funding will allow researchers to address the impact of the physical demands of military service that increase the risks for service members to develop arthritis. Combat injuries often lead to post-traumatic osteoarthritis, and service members may begin experiencing symptoms within 2 years of injury, much quicker than the general population. Currently, this translates to younger people developing arthritis, higher discharge rates, and many more life years of arthritis-related health care needs and costs. Musculoskeletal disorders were the leading cause of medical evacuation from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Your recognition of the profound effect of arthritis on our military readiness and retention through this funding may lead to interventions and treatments to help our service members and veterans. Additionally, the return on investment from developing interventions and treatments, and ultimately preventing arthritis, are huge, both in terms of cost and quality of life among our military personnel.

This research being housed in the DoD is essential to our success. Studying the impact of arthritis on service members as the risks among our military personnel are directly related to military service and their treatment needs may be different. Thank you for recognizing this need and investing in a healthier

future for active service members, veterans, and the rest of the millions of Americans living with arthritis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. White".

Douglas White, MD, PhD

President, American College of Rheumatology

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Taylor".

Steve Taylor

President and CEO, Arthritis Foundation