



American College  
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## LETTER SENT TO MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

September 18, 2000

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine (ACP-ASIM) and the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM), we are writing to express concern about the level of funding available for VA medical and prosthetic research. ACP-ASIM is the nation's largest medical specialty society representing more than 115,000 doctors of internal medicine and medical students. SGIM is an international association of 3,000 physicians and other health professionals who combine treating patients with teaching and involvement in conducting research. We urge you to consider supporting increased funding for this critical medical research for America's veterans.

We understand that when the House of Representatives passed its version of the VA-HUD Appropriations bill, it included funding for the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program at \$351 million. However, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved funding the program at \$331 million. We understand that the Senate may be considering the VA-HUD Appropriations bill as early as this week. On behalf of all veterans, we urge you to support Veterans' Medical and Prosthetic Research at a funding level of at least \$351 million.

Research conducted at VA hospitals around the country is extremely important, not to just veterans, but to everyone. While veterans make up a relatively small portion of the overall population, the group consists of a cross-section of the population as a whole. As a result, research on VA patients can be conducted in small groups and the findings translated to the nation as a whole. The smaller population makes it easier to test new procedures, and represents a more cost-effective way to do so. Money allotted to the VA for medical research supports current research studies on prostate cancer, diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's Disease, mental health and aging related conditions, which have positive benefits for the entire health care system and is clearly money well spent.

As the Senate debates funding for the Veterans Administration medical and prosthetic research priorities in the FY2001 VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill, please keep in mind the importance of this research program and support the \$351 million appropriation for VA Medical and Prosthetic Research.

Thank you for your continued hard work for veterans' medical care and research.

Robert Doherty  
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