

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

March 24, 2008

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Stevens,

We are writing to request your strong support for providing an annual operating level of \$50 million in FY2008 to improve the treatment of extremity war injuries through the Peer Reviewed Orthopaedic Extremity Trauma Research Program – a DOD program of urgent importance to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This competitively awarded research program, operated by the U.S. Army's Medical Research and Materiel Command, was designed to address urgent medical challenges and involve military and civilian orthopaedic surgeons and researchers on these efforts. Peer reviewers score proposals based on the degree of military relevance, "real time" military impact, and scientific merit. This process ensures that research projects selected for funding have the highest chance for improving treatment of battlefield injuries.

There continues to be a profound need for this focused medical research to help military surgeons find new limb-sparing techniques to save injured extremities, avoid amputations and preserve and restore the function of injured extremities. Approximately 82 percent of war injuries suffered fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan involve the extremities – often severe and multiple injuries to the arms, legs, head and neck. Most wounds are caused by exploding ordinance, most frequently improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) or high-velocity gunshot wounds.

With dramatic increases in survivability on the battlefield now, this conflict is experiencing a new type of patient -- a warfighter with multiple and severely mangled extremities who is often free of other life-threatening injury to the torso. Military

surgeons face a unique situation with very specific new problems and injuries not seen in civilian medical practice. Injuries from IEDs and other explosive ordnance in Iraq and Afghanistan differ markedly from those of gunshot wounds sustained in civilian society.

The interest and capacity of the U.S. research community is strong. At this time, the Defense Department has just completed its most recent peer review of research proposals. The result: over \$107 million in urgently needed, high quality research will be left unfunded unless the program receives significant resources in FY2008.

As you work towards the next legislative vehicle to fund war-related expenses, we respectfully request that you provide an annual operating level of \$50 million for this important research that will improve treatment of wounded warriors.

Sincerely,

Tom Harkin

Kay Bailey Hutchison

Sheldon Brown

Jim Cooper

Tommy Franks

Saxby Chambliss

John Cornyn

Ben Cardin

Robert A. Mikulski

Norm Coleman

John Barrasso Edward M Kennedy

Debbie Stabenow

Barack Obama

Dick Durbin