

May 13, 2024

The Honorable John Tester
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: FY 2025 Funding Request for CDMRP Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research

Dear Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Collins:

The undersigned organizations representing clinicians, researchers, and consumers of orthotic brace and prosthetic limb care required by millions of patients, including service members, veterans, and civilians across the United States, are writing to request that Congress appropriate \$15 million in FY 2025 to fund the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP)'s Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research Program (OPORP).

In FY 2014, OPORP was established by Congress in the U.S. Department of Defense to support research to improve health outcomes and the well-being of individuals with limb loss or limb impairment. According to CDMRP, the loss of a limb or limb functionality is one of the most debilitating traumatic injuries sustained by U.S. military personnel. There were over 1700 warriors who lost limbs in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and over 160,000 individuals with limb loss covered by the DOD health program.

In its first year, OPORP was funded at \$10 million. By FY 2020, its annual appropriation had risen to \$15 million, then to \$20 million in FY 2022, and \$15 million in FY 2023. This consistent support recognizes both past accomplishments and the continued need to fund research to address increased limb loss and limb impairment due to trauma, cancer, and vascular disease.

CDMRP has acknowledged that in the VA health care system alone, the majority of veterans with amputations have lost limbs due to the progression of vascular disease. Also, stroke is now the leading cause of long-term disability in the U.S. and ankle-foot orthoses are a key treatment for helping stroke patients compensate for muscle weakness and improve overall mobility.

For a decade, OPORP has contributed to significant advances in knowledge pertaining to treatment options in prosthetic and/or orthotic care, providing a fundamental base for evidence-based and clinically-informed decisions. In January 2023, CDMRP issued a Strategic Plan that provided five-year goals for future OPORP research, stating that while there have been great advances in the technology of orthotics and prosthetics, outcomes research is still needed to inform users, care providers, and policy makers about how these orthotic and prosthetic interventions can best assist individuals to improve their function, enhance their quality of life, and restore their ability to return to duty or work and increase their productivity.

Clearly, there is a critical need to continue this research. Therefore, we respectfully ask you to support \$15 million in FY 2025 funding for the Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association on Health and Disability
American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Amputee Coalition
Blinded Veterans Association
Board for Certification/Accreditation
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Institute for Matching Person and Technology
International Eye Foundation
Lakeshore Foundation
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
RESNA
The Viscardi Center
United Spinal Association

Orthotic and Prosthetic Researchers, Programs and Institutions

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