

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

February 22, 2007

Dear Colleague:

As many as 7.5 million Americans are affected by psoriasis – a chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there are limited treatments and no cure. Between 10 percent and 30 percent of people with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis. Psoriatic arthritis causes pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints. The National Psoriasis Foundation estimates that the average congressional district has as many as 17,000 people living with psoriasis and/or psoriatic arthritis.


Psoriasis is widely misunderstood, minimized and under-treated. In addition to the pain, itching and bleeding caused by psoriasis, many affected individuals also experience social discrimination and stigma. Many people also mistakenly believe psoriasis to be contagious. Psoriasis typically first strikes between age 15 to 25 and lasts a lifetime. People with psoriasis also are at elevated risk for myriad co-morbidities, including but not limited to heart disease, diabetes, obesity and mental health conditions. As such, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis impose significant burden on individuals and society; psoriasis alone is estimated to cost the nation 56 million hours of lost work and between \$2 billion and \$3 billion in treatments each year.

Despite the serious adverse effects that psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis have on individuals, families and society, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are under-recognized and under-funded by our nation's research institutions. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has spent less than one dollar per person with psoriasis on average each of the last ten years. At the historical and current rate of psoriasis funding, NIH funding is not keeping pace with research needs.

We hope you will consider signing on to the attached letter which urges \$30.8 billion funding - a 6.7% increase in FY 2008 funding for the NIH and its institutes and centers that play an integral role in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research. A greater investment in the coming year in these essential research agencies will help advance our nation's efforts to identify improved treatments and a cure for these challenging diseases.

For more information, or to sign on to the letter, please contact Caroline Powers in Representative Lynch's office at 5-8273 or Annie Fultz in Representative Gerlach's office at 5-4315.

Sincerely,

  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH  
Member of Congress

  
JIM GERLACH  
Member of Congress