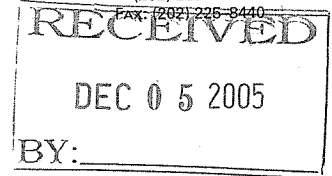


JIM GERLACH  
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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3806

December 1, 2005

Elias Zerhouni, M.D.  
Director, National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bldg One, Room 126  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Zerhouni:

As Members dedicated to ensuring that our nation takes all the steps necessary to identify effective new therapies, and ultimately a cure, for psoriasis, we are writing to request specific information regarding the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) research funding for and activities related to psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Adequate federal investment in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research is essential to ensuring that we are doing everything possible to treat and cure these challenging conditions that affect more than 5 million people and cost the nation billions each year in direct and indirect medical costs.

We are very concerned that psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are not receiving their proportionate share of our nation's biomedical research investment and attention. It is our understanding that over the past ten years, on average, the NIH has invested only approximately \$1 per person with psoriasis annually. While the NIH's recently updated research funding "report" (<http://www.nih.gov/news/fundingresearchareas.htm>) shows that overall funding for psoriasis has increased \$1 million a year from FY 2003 to FY 2005, with the rate of medical research inflation taken into account, this increase is much less than it appears, and proves insufficient to address the public health burden of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Moreover, we are very concerned that the chart estimates that FY 2006 funding will remain stagnant at \$7 million, a level of investment that we consider inadequate, particularly taking into account the historically low levels of investment in these conditions and the rate medical research inflation.

Although we appreciate that the nation is facing difficult budgetary challenges and understand that NIH has many competing priorities, we know that report language was included in both the House and Senate FY 2005 Labor-Health and Human Services (LHHS) funding measures urging the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) to "support additional genetic research to identify the genes responsible for psoriasis susceptibility, basic research to understand the mechanism of disease and clinical research to identify new safe and effective therapies for these diseases [psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis]." We are concerned that at the exact same

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time Congress is prioritizing psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research NIH appears to be reducing its fiscal commitment to these conditions.

In addition to providing us with the total amount of research funding spent *specifically* on psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis (broken out by each condition), we are requesting detailed information on the NIH agencies, offices, and centers involved in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research and their respective research agendas, projects, and budgets related to these two conditions. Please note that we are interested in specific research projects and funding for *psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis*, not just those projects somewhat related to skin disease or general osteoarthritis. We also request that you provide us with a status report on what actions have been taken as a result of the FY 2004 LHHS Conference Report provision which requested that NIAMS "provide a detailed action plan of Institute activities to effectively implement the recommendations of the [Burden of Skin Diseases] workshop participants."

We look forward to hearing back from you regarding these important issues. Thank you for your attention to our concerns and requests.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Gerlach", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim Gerlach  
Member of Congress

JG:cw