

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the estimated 8.3 million Americans who have psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, we write to respectfully request \$1 million in funding, as well as corresponding report language, in the Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The funding and language will help to advance public health initiatives to improve the lives of people impacted by psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are painful and disfiguring chronic immune-mediated diseases affecting approximately 3 percent of the adult population in the United States. Psoriasis manifests on the skin, often in multiple locations, causing itchy and painful patches or lesions. Up to 30 percent of people with psoriasis may also develop psoriatic arthritis, an inflammatory form of arthritis that can cause irreversible joint damage if left untreated. As the joint AAD (American Academy of Dermatology) and NPF guidelines released in 2019 indicate, individuals with psoriatic disease are at a heightened risk of developing a number of comorbid conditions including cardiovascular disease and stroke, diabetes and hypertension, as well as depression and anxiety. A study on psoriasis published in 2015 found that the disease may cost the nation as much as \$135 billion per year in direct and indirect costs.

In FY 2010, Congress appropriated \$1.5 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a public health agenda on psoriatic disease. The resulting agenda summarized current knowledge on psoriatic disease as well as knowledge gaps and included a comprehensive blueprint for public health research that could address those gaps and contribute to improved lives for people living with the disease. Unfortunately, without follow-on funding, the agency has not been able to pursue the priorities identified in the public health agenda.

The requested FY 2020 funding will build upon the foundation of the public health agenda to address a key gap and, in so doing, help improve the quality of life for people with psoriatic disease. Specifically, the \$1 million being requested would support research on the connection between psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and other chronic conditions. This enhanced knowledge could lead to targeted public health interventions to help persons with the disease better manage their care and would help further inform the overall research agenda in this space. In addition,

this research could inform the broader health concern of those suffering from immune-mediated diseases. To help guide the use of these funds, we request that you include the following report language under the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion subheading within the CDC section of the report.

Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis—The Committee recognizes the growing body of evidence linking psoriatic disease, which impacts more than eight million Americans, to other comorbidities such as cardiovascular disease, mental health and substance abuse challenges, kidney disease, and other conditions. The Committee commends the CDC for identifying opportunities for expanded research on psoriatic disease in its Public Health Agenda for Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis and provides \$1 million in funding to support intramural and grant-based research on the comorbidities of psoriatic disease, including development of self-management education resources and to address other public health challenges identified in the CDC’s Public Health Agenda for Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis.

We thank you for giving your complete thoughtful consideration to this request.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

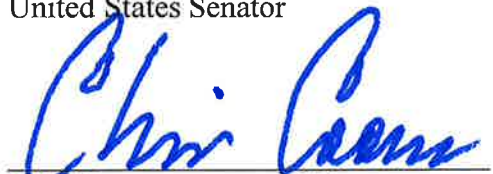

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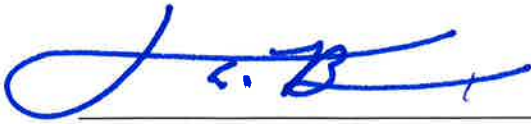

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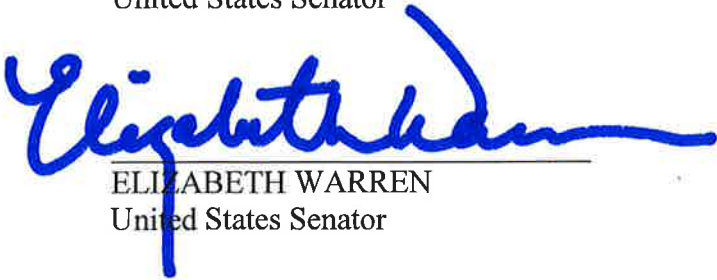

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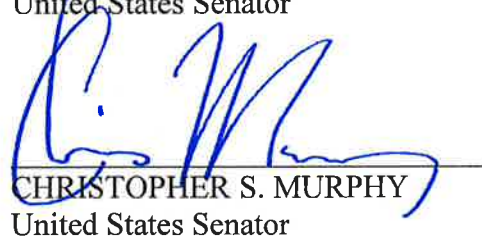
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