

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 2, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Vice Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building S-128
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairman Durbin:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Department of Defense Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you maintain the eligibility of eating disorders for research funding under the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). We appreciate your commitment to eating disorders research under PRMRP in the FY 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations bill and urge you to continue this support. Funding through PRMRP offers an important opportunity to study diseases—like eating disorders—that are not well-understood, have limited treatment options, and for which military service confers a high risk.

Thirty million Americans experience a clinically significant eating disorder at some time in their life, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder. Eating disorders are serious and complex mental health conditions that affect people of all genders, ages, body sizes, races, sexual orientations and socioeconomic statuses, and have a notably higher prevalence rate in women. In addition, the mortality rate of eating disorders is the highest among mental illnesses, higher than prostate and melanoma cancer, and equal to acute leukemia.

Studies have shown that there is a higher prevalence of eating disorders among servicemembers than the civilian population. According to an article published by *Clinical Psychology*, as many as 30 percent of female cadets and 34 percent of active duty female servicemembers across all branches of the military are at-risk for an eating disorder.¹ Unfortunately, these servicemembers also have a very low rate of seeking treatment. Additionally, children of servicemembers report similar conditions at a significantly higher rate than the civilian population—over 20 percent.²

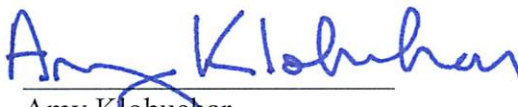
Despite the high prevalence of Americans with eating disorders, the high mortality rates of those with eating disorders, and a documented higher incidence of eating disorders among servicemembers, there is currently minimal federal funding for eating disorders research. We believe that maintaining the eligibility of eating disorders under the PRMRP in FY2018 is critical to advancing research that would improve care for military members, their families and all who are or will be affected by this deadly disease. Thank you for considering this request.

¹ Bodell, L., Forney, K. J., Keel, P., Gutierrez, P., & Joiner, T. E. (2014). Consequences of making weight: a review of eating disorder symptoms and diagnoses in the United States military. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 21(4), 398–409.

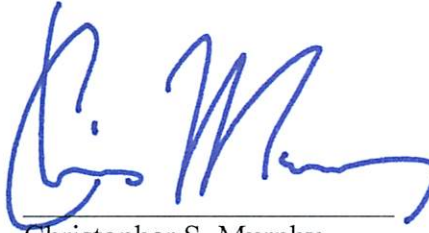
² Waasdorp, C. E., Caboot, J. B., Robinson, C. A., Abraham, A. A., & Adelman, W. P. (2007). Screening Military Dependent Adolescent Females for Disordered Eating. *Military Medicine*, 172(9), 962-967. doi:10.7205/milmed.172.9.962

Sincerely,


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator


Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Al Franken
United States Senator


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator