

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Carter  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: VA Neurology Centers of Excellence FY23 Funding**

Dear Chair Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Carter,

**We are writing to respectfully request funding in the highest amount possible for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Neurology Centers of Excellence focused on epilepsy, headache, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease in Fiscal Year 2023.**

Nine million veterans are enrolled in VA care around the nation, including many who live with neurologic disease – some of which is service-connected. These Veterans often benefit from the unique care of neurology-related Centers of Excellence, which are fully integrated into a VA medical center to better coordinate multidisciplinary care. Each neurologic condition has primary centers and consortium sites around the United States. Each of these centers provide state-of-the-art clinical care, educational resources for Veterans and other VA health care providers, and conduct medical research. Through the rapid adoption of telehealth, Veterans around the country are benefiting even more from the specialized services provided by these centers.

Congress has played a key role in creating and maintaining these centers over the last two decades as the increasing number of veterans affected by neurologic conditions has become clear. In fiscal year 2022, Congress provided strong vocal support for all the centers, directed VA to double the number of headache centers around the country, provided \$10 million for the epilepsy centers, and requested a report from the VA focused on opportunities to enhance care for veterans with neurologic conditions.

Despite this progress, it remains clear that more resources are needed for these centers to provide the best care possible for our veterans. In particular, it is remarkable that the **multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease centers** have not received a significant increase in funding for nearly 20 years despite increases in veterans with these conditions. Funding has not significantly increased even after the VA officially recognized Parkinson's disease as being associated with Agent Orange in 2010 and Traumatic Brain Injuries in 2012. Multiple sclerosis is a condition that is presumptively service connected as long as it is diagnosed within seven years after

separating from service – and the number of diagnosed veterans with MS has more than doubled since these centers were founded.

Even the centers that have seen increases over the years could benefit from further investment. **The epilepsy centers**, for instance, are interested in expanding the tele-EEG program and adding centers to improve care in underserved areas and decrease geographic voids for some veterans with epilepsy who are unable to drive due to seizure frequency.

Importantly, for each of the centers, strong and stable funding is critical to recruit and retain physicians and other health care providers, allowing them to care for our Veterans.

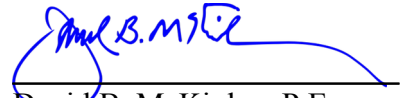
The VA Neurology Centers of Excellence are providing an essential service to America’s Veterans who live with chronic neurologic conditions. To continue and enhance their ability to provide the best care possible, we urge you to provide robust funding for these programs in fiscal year 2023.

Sincerely,



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Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



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David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress



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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress