

May 13, 2024

The Honorable John Tester  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: FY 2025 Funding Request for CDMRP Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research**

Dear Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Collins:

The undersigned organizations representing clinicians, researchers, and consumers of orthotic brace and prosthetic limb care required by millions of patients, including service members, veterans, and civilians across the United States, are writing to request that Congress appropriate \$15 million in FY 2025 to fund the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP)'s Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research Program (OPORP).

In FY 2014, OPORP was established by Congress in the U.S. Department of Defense to support research to improve health outcomes and the well-being of individuals with limb loss or limb impairment. According to CDMRP, the loss of a limb or limb functionality is one of the most debilitating traumatic injuries sustained by U.S. military personnel. There were over 1700 warriors who lost limbs in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and over 160,000 individuals with limb loss covered by the DOD health program.

In its first year, OPORP was funded at \$10 million. By FY 2020, its annual appropriation had risen to \$15 million, then to \$20 million in FY 2022, and \$15 million in FY 2023. This consistent support recognizes both past accomplishments and the continued need to fund research to address increased limb loss and limb impairment due to trauma, cancer, and vascular disease.

CDMRP has acknowledged that in the VA health care system alone, the majority of veterans with amputations have lost limbs due to the progression of vascular disease. Also, stroke is now the leading cause of long-term disability in the U.S. and ankle-foot orthoses are a key treatment for helping stroke patients compensate for muscle weakness and improve overall mobility.

For a decade, OPORP has contributed to significant advances in knowledge pertaining to treatment options in prosthetic and/or orthotic care, providing a fundamental base for evidence-based and clinically-informed decisions. In January 2023, CDMRP issued a Strategic Plan that provided five-year goals for future OPORP research, stating that while there have been great advances in the technology of orthotics and prosthetics, outcomes research is still needed to inform users, care providers, and policy makers about how these orthotic and prosthetic interventions can best assist individuals to improve their function, enhance their quality of life, and restore their ability to return to duty or work and increase their productivity.

Clearly, there is a critical need to continue this research. Therefore, we respectfully ask you to support \$15 million in FY 2025 funding for the Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists  
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics  
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine  
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association  
American Physical Therapy Association  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
Amputee Coalition  
Blinded Veterans Association  
Board for Certification/Accreditation  
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund  
Institute for Matching Person and Technology  
International Eye Foundation  
Lakeshore Foundation  
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics  
RESNA  
The Viscardi Center  
United Spinal Association

**Orthotic and Prosthetic Researchers, Programs and Institutions**

University of Washington School of Medicine  
Seattle, WA

Ghaith J. Androwis, PhD  
Rehabilitation Robotics and Research Laboratory  
Senior Research Scientist, Center for Mobility and Rehabilitation Engineering Research  
Kessler Foundation  
West Orange, NJ

Elisa S. Arch, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Kinesiology & Applied Physiology  
University of Delaware  
Newark, DE

Jeannie Bailey, PhD  
Rehabilitation Researcher  
San Francisco, CA

Cory Christiansen, PT, PhD  
Rehabilitation Researcher  
Aurora, CO

Benjamin Darter, PT, PhD  
Chair and Associate Professor  
Richmond, VA

Todd Farrell, PhD  
Chief Executive Officer  
Jennifer Johansson, MS  
Director of Research  
Liberating Technologies, Inc. (LTI)  
Holliston, MA

Goeran Fiedler, PhD  
Rehabilitation Researcher  
Pittsburgh, PA

Steven Gard, PhD  
Executive Director, Northwestern University Prosthetics-Orthotics Center  
Chicago, IL

Emily Graczyk, PhD  
Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering  
Cleveland, OH

Levi Hargrove, PhD  
Scientific Chair  
Regenstein Center for Bionic Medicine  
Shirley Ryan AbilityLab  
Chicago, IL

Kinsey Herrin, MSPO, C/LPO, FAAOP  
Senior Clinical Research Scientist  
Atlanta, GA

Xiaogang Hu, PhD  
Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Kinesiology, and Physical Medicine &  
Rehabilitation  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA

Arun Jayaraman, PT, PhD  
Director Max Nader Center for Rehabilitation Technologies & Outcomes Research  
Shirley Ryan AbilityLab  
Chicago, IL

Kenton Kaufman, PhD, PE  
Professor of Orthopedics and Biomedical Engineering  
Mayo Clinic  
Rochester, MN

Geza Kogler, PhD  
Associate Professor Prosthetics and Orthotics  
Kennesaw, GA

Szu-Ping Lee, PT, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Department of Physical Therapy  
University of Nevada  
Las Vegas, NV

Blair Lock  
Chief Executive Officer  
Coapt Engineering  
Chicago, IL

Laura Miller, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Chicago, IL

Teri Rosenbaum-Chou, PhD  
Chief Executive Officer  
Modus Health  
Edmonds, WA

Andrew Sawers, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Department of Kinesiology  
Chicago, IL

Matthew Wernke, PhD  
Director of Research and Development  
Jim Colvin, MS  
Director of Quality  
WillowWood Global LLC  
Mt. Sterling, OH

Jason Wilken, PT, PhD  
Director, Collaborative Research and Development  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA

Shane R. Wurdeman, PhD  
Vice President, Scientific Affairs  
Certified/Licensed Prosthetist  
Hanger Clinic  
Chicago, IL

Aaron Young, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Director of the Exoskeleton and Prosthetic Intelligent Controls Lab  
Atlanta, GA