

**OFFICERS**

October 11, 2017

Ilene M. Rosen, MD, MS  
*President*

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
218 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chairman  
House Committee on Armed Services  
2208 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Douglas Kirsch, MD  
*President-Elect*

Ronald D. Chervin, MD, MS  
*Immediate Past President*

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
728 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Armed Services  
2264 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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Steve Van Hout  
*Executive Director*

**RE: Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program funding**

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry, and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

On behalf of the board of directors of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), I thank you for your leadership on health care issues that impact both active service members and veterans. As you go to conference to negotiate a final Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), please continue to support critical medical research activities facilitated through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP). The CDMRP fills research gaps by funding high impact, high risk, and high gain projects that help transform health care for service members and the American public.

As the leading professional society in the medical subspecialty of sleep medicine, the AASM is particularly concerned about the impact that insufficient sleep and untreated sleep disorders have on the readiness, resilience and health of our service members and veterans. Recognized as part of the [U.S. Army Performance Triad](#), sleep is essential for optimal health, performance and well-being. However, healthy sleep is often compromised by the demands of active duty service.

For example, the 2016 "[Health of the Force](#)" report found that the overall installation score for optimal sleep levels was only 68 out of 100 among active component soldiers, and only 23 percent met the recommended sleep goals and standards. Military leaders and soldiers interviewed for the report consistently associated a lack of sleep with accidents, poor morale, and impaired judgment. Furthermore, the [2015 report](#) noted that almost half of service members have a clinically significant sleep problem that results in chronic fatigue or impairment in daytime military functions. This helps explain why fatigue was a contributing factor in 628 Army accidents and 32 soldier deaths in fiscal years 2011 – 2014.

Sleep problems also are a detriment to mental health. The 2015 RAND report “[Sleep in the Military](#)” noted that sleep disturbances are a core feature of many psychological disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and traumatic brain injury (TBI), which are the three most common mental health diagnoses among both active-duty service members and veterans. Data also suggest that veterans with PTSD have a [higher risk of obstructive sleep apnea](#) than the general population. To draw attention to this important relationship between sleep apnea and mental health, Congressman Sam Graves (R-MO) introduced [H. Res 46](#) into the 115th Congress.

More research is needed through the CDMRP so we can have a better understanding of how to optimize sleep before, during and after active service. Located within the Department of Defense (DoD) U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC), the CDMRP is leading the advancement of military medicine through innovative programs such as the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program, which has a vision to, “Improve the health and well-being of all military service members, veterans, and beneficiaries.” Your continued support for the CDMRP is essential to ensure that the medical care of our service members and veterans is guided by the highest quality research.

As you discuss a final FY 2018 NDAA, please maintain the current commitment to medical research by opposing any restrictions to CDMRP funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,  
Ilene M. Rosen, MD, MS  
President

cc: Steve Van Hout, AASM Executive Director  
John Noel, Sleep Research Society Executive Director