

# Encourage Ongoing Research into Sleep and Support Public Health Activities Focused on Sleep Disorders

Dear Colleague:

Please join me in supporting federal research and public health activities critical to advancing our scientific understanding of sleep and sleep disorders. Sleep impacts nearly every system of the body and affects the progression of many medical conditions. Millions of Americans are impacted by sleep disorders and, in general, healthy sleep is a major public health and safety issue.

The sleep and circadian research portfolio within the National Institutes of Health has grown and facilitated meaningful scientific progress, which includes the 2017 Nobel Prize in Medicine. However, more work is needed to deliver breakthroughs for patients impacted by debilitating sleep disorders. The National Center on Sleep Disorders Research at NIH is reinvigorating coordinated research activities in this area and their emerging efforts should be recognized with timely committee recommendations.

For over a decade “sleep disorders” have been part of the Department of Defense Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). During that time, the DoD has become a leader on sleep research with critical projects on fatigue, combat readiness, PTSD, and related mental health challenges. For FY 2020, sleep disorders should continue to be included in the PRMRP so that this promising research can continue to move forward.

Healthy sleep is one of the most prevalent (and treatable) public health issues impacting the country. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that the decades-old and highly-successful National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project would come to an end at the start of FY 2019. Currently, there is no comprehensive surveillance, professional education, and public health program focused on sleep at CDC. These activities need to be revitalized as quickly as possible with a modest programmatic request for dedicated CDC funding.

To sign on, please contact Anthony Theissen at [Anthony.Theissen@mail.house.gov](mailto:Anthony.Theissen@mail.house.gov) or x54176 by COB Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Sincerely,

Adam Schiff

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Dear Chairs DeLauro and Visclosky and Ranking Members Cole and Calvert:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, we write to request the inclusion of timely committee recommendations on sleep and sleep disorders within the Committee Report accompanying the House FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Bill. We would also like to request the continued inclusion of “sleep disorders” as a condition eligible for study through the Department of Defense (DoD) Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP) within the Committee Report accompanying the FY 2020 DoD Appropriations Bill.

With the recent investments in the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the sleep and circadian research portfolio has grown and facilitated meaningful scientific progress, which includes the 2017 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. While this progress is certainly encouraging, more work is needed to deliver

breakthroughs for patients impacted by debilitating sleep disorders. The National Center on Sleep Disorders Research at NIH is reinvigorating coordinated research activities in this area and their emerging efforts should be encouraged. Therefore, we respectfully recommend the Committee include the following report language in the accompanying report of its FY 2020 LHHS bill:

*“Sleep Disorders.—*The committee commends the recent expansion and advancement of the sleep and circadian research portfolio under the coordination of the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research. The committee encourages dedicated research activities on specific sleep disorders, such as narcolepsy and restless legs syndrome, to ensure scientific progress benefits patients impacted by debilitating conditions disordering their sleep and biological rhythms.”

Sleep impacts nearly every system of the body and affects the progression of many medical conditions. Millions of Americans are impacted by sleep disorders and, in general, healthy sleep is a major public health and safety issue. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently sunset the only public health effort focused on sleep, the National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project (NHSAP), citing a lack of dedicated resources. Public health activities focused on sleep and sleep disorders at CDC need to be reinvigorated as soon as possible. To that end, we also ask the Committee to provide \$250,000 to the CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion to support surveillance, public awareness, professional education, and stakeholder collaboration to advance public health activities focused on “sleep and sleep disorders”.

The DoD is a leader on sleep research with critical projects on combat readiness, fatigue, and the relationship between sleep and mental health challenges. These projects are often coordinated with NIH and the Veterans Administration, but they are made possible through the PRMRP. To that end, we request the continued inclusion of “sleep disorders” on the PRMRP’s annual eligible conditions through the Committee Report accompanying the FY 2020 DoD Appropriations Bill. Maintaining “sleep disorders” in the PRMRP will ensure these important research projects can continue to move forward.

On behalf of the sleep disorders community, we appreciate your consideration of our request and your willingness to engage on these critical issues.

Sincerely,