



The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen McConnell and Calvert, and Ranking Members Coons and McCollum:

Thank you for your leadership on medical research and defense health programs. I write you today on behalf of the Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research (FSR) and the wider sarcoidosis stakeholder community to thank you for including “sarcoidosis” as an eligible condition to study through the FY 2026 Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). We ask that you once again include “sarcoidosis” on the eligible conditions list within the Committee Report accompanying the Senate’s FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Bill to support ongoing sarcoidosis research through this important program.

The [Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research](#) (FSR) is the leading international organization dedicated to finding a cure for sarcoidosis and improving care for sarcoidosis patients through research, education, and support. Since its establishment in 2000, FSR has fostered over \$10 million in sarcoidosis-specific research efforts. FSR is actively working with the world leaders in sarcoidosis, investing in innovative, patient-centered research efforts and providing educational resources, support, and opportunities to accelerate research to patients worldwide. Our goals are to advance research and find a cure while educating the public and professional community and providing support to affected patients and families.

Sarcoidosis is an inflammatory disease characterized by the formation of granulomas—tiny clumps of inflammatory cells—in one or more organs of the body. When the immune system goes into overdrive and too many of these clumps form, they can interfere with an organ’s structure and function. When left unchecked, chronic inflammation can lead to fibrosis, which is the permanent scarring of organ tissue. This disorder affects the lungs in approximately 90% of cases, but it can affect almost any organ in the body. Despite increasing advances in research, sarcoidosis remains difficult to diagnose with limited treatment options and no known cure. Sarcoidosis is considered chronic in people whose disease remains active for more than 2-5 years; in this population sarcoidosis can be debilitating and life-threatening. It’s estimated that the prevalence of sarcoidosis in the US ranges between 150,000 and 200,000 with an estimated 1.2 million individuals with sarcoidosis worldwide.

A recent study of over 13 million veterans found an annual prevalence was about two times higher (141 vs. 60 cases/100,000 persons), and the **annual incidence was about four to five times higher (52 vs. 10 cases/100,000 person-years) in veterans vs. non veterans.** With the highest incidence in the Navy, Airforce and Army. Sarcoidosis is acknowledged as a presumed disability under the PACT ACT of



2022¹; however, many veteran risks expand well beyond just burn pit exposure. Potential toxic exposure due to jet fuel, the foam used for landing on aircraft carriers, dusty roads, and roads are also thought to play a significant role in the increased risk for sarcoidosis by soldiers . Veterans with pulmonary sarcoidosis show an increase of metal in their blood plasma. Follow-up studies that drill down to the specific external environmental exposures, internal atmosphere of work areas, and associated duties are needed to shed light on actionable risk-factor modification for military service members are essential.² FSR is currently conducting a patient reported outcomes survey to better capture the overall veteran risks, exposures, and outcomes.

On behalf of FSR, the patients we serve, and the dedicated community of researchers working in this area, we appreciate your consideration of our request to once again include sarcoidosis in the eligible areas of study under the PRMRP as you consider DoD appropriations for FY 2027. Please consider FSR as a resource as the legislative process continues. Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary E. McGowan'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Mary E. McGowan, President and CEO

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¹ Jani, N., Christie, I.C., Wu, T.D. *et al.* Factors associated with a diagnosis of sarcoidosis among US veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. *Sci Rep* **12**, 22045 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-24853-8>

² Seedahmed MI, Baugh AD, Albirair MT, Luo Y, Chen J, McCulloch CE, et al. Epidemiology of sarcoidosis in U.S. veterans from 2003 to 2019. *Ann Am Thorac Soc* . 2023;20:797–806. doi: 10.1513/AnnalsATS.202206-515OC.