

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write to support language in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2024 to strongly urge the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to include active-duty servicemembers in NIH-funded research on psychedelics. As the largest public funder of biomedical research in the world, this directive for the NIH would expand government wide efforts to understand the potential risks and benefits of psychedelic-assisted therapy to this critical population.

We need new approaches to adequately address the threat of trauma-related disorders and chronic pain to both active-duty and veteran servicemembers. Our men and women in uniform are disproportionately impacted by these disorders, and a recent NIH-funded study found that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) had an incidence rate of nearly 13% in the active-duty military population.¹ Moreover, the correlation between chronic pain and trauma-related disorders is also ascendent for serving personnel.² Together, these behavioral and physical health issues afflict too many of our servicemembers and their families, all while threatening military readiness.

In response to this ongoing crisis, there has been a renewed interest in the promise of clinical therapies – particularly psychedelic-assisted applications – to treat these specific disorders. For instance, a recent Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cosigned Phase 3 Trial of MDMA-Assisted Therapy for PTSD found that 67% of participants who received three MDMA-assisted therapy sessions no longer qualified for a PTSD diagnosis and 88% experienced a clinically meaningful reduction in symptoms.³ It should be noted that the trial group featured nearly hundred participants who had been suffering from PTSD for an average of 14 years.

This landmark data underscores the need for more scientific inquiry, but it also shows there is a gap in our understanding for how these therapies could function in the active-duty demographic. The NIH has

¹ [Incidence Rates of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Over a 17-Year Period in Active Duty Military Service Members - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

² [Relationship Between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms and Chronic Pain-Related Symptom Domains Among Military Active-Duty Service Members - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

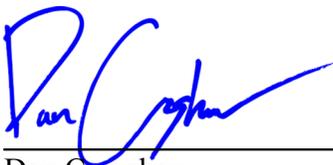
³ [MDMA-assisted therapy for severe PTSD: a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase 3 study | Nature Medicine](#)

active projects that involve participation by the Department of Veteran Affairs medical center system, but strengthening this existing interest and expanding it to the currently serving population will broaden our cross-agency study of potential benefits.

By instructing the NIH to pursue these efforts in collaboration with Department of Defense (DOD) policy, we can ensure that our research enterprise is including all potential beneficiaries, especially our military, in this vital research. The DOD has existing rules for permitting external research, and we are asking that the NIH work within the required authorities to facilitate research opportunities that improve our understanding of how potential psychedelic therapies might work for currently serving Americans.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

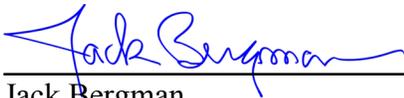
Sincerely,



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Max W. Miller
Member of Congress



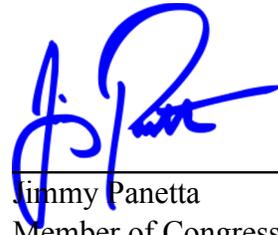
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