National Council on
Skin Cancer Prevention

www.skincancerprevention.org

February XX, 2019

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairman Peter Visclosky
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
H-405 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member Ken Calvert
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Defense
H-405 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention (National Council) respectfully writes to request that the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee include $20 million for melanoma research in the Fiscal 2020 Department of Defense Appropriations bill.

The National Council is an organization with the mission of serving as a "united voice to prevent skin cancer through education, advocacy and raising awareness." The National Council's members represent the nation's premier researchers, clinicians, and advocates for melanoma and skin cancer prevention, and it plays a unique role in connecting more than 45 organizations, agencies, and associations in pursuing its mission.

A 2000 "Annals of Epidemiology" study comparing mortality among WWII veterans of the Pacific and European Theaters found that Pacific Theater Prisoner of War veterans had an estimated 3-fold higher risk of dying from melanoma than veterans of the European Theater.[i] The article concluded that these data are "consistent with the hypothesis that exposure to high levels of solar radiation in young adulthood is associated with a higher risk of melanoma mortality." As many serious cases arise many years after the worst exposure, it is likely that we will see increased rates among Korean and Vietnam War veterans as well.

A 2015 study of warfighters returning from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) missions in Afghanistan and Iraq found that 84% of respondents worked in a desert climate, 77% spent 4 or more hours per day working in bright sun, and 64% spent more than 75% of their days working in the bright sun.[ii] However, only 13% of respondents reported routine sunscreen use and less than 30% had routine access to sunscreen while working. That study concluded: "The past decade of United States' combat missions, including operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, have occurred at a more equatorial latitude than the mean center of the United States population, increasing the potential for ultraviolent irradiance and the development of skin cancer."

According to *The* Pulse,[iii] the online source for the Uniformed Services University, concluded that "melanoma is the most significant cancer to affect the active duty military population." A 2014 Military Medicine Study found that the overall incidence rate in active duty military personnel between 2000 and 2007 was 62% greater than the general population during the same period.[iv] According to the Fiscal 2015 DOD Report to Congress, a detailed analysis by the Automated Central Tumor Registry of DoD-published data also found that the incidence of melanoma was higher in the U.S. military population in comparison to the U.S. general population.

The endorsing National Council organizations listed below thank you for considering this important request and would greatly appreciate that the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee provide $20 million for Department of Defense-funded melanoma research in the Fiscal 2020 Defense Appropriations bill.

Should you have any questions, please contact me, at antonishak@skincancerprevention.org or 301.801.4422.

Sincerelv.

John D. Antonishak
Executive Director

Endorsing Organizations:

[i] William Page, David Whitman, Michael Murphy. A Comparison of Melanoma Mortality among WWII Veterans of the Pacific and European Theaters. Annals of Epidemiology. Volume 10. Issue 3. April 2000, pages 192-195

[ii]PowersJG, Patel NA, Powers EA, Mayer JE, Stricklin GP, Geller AC. Skin cancer risk factors and preventative behaviors among United States military veterans deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. J Invest Dermatology. 2015; 135

[iii] The Pulse, February 15, 2018

[iv] C. Suzanne Lead, Jimmy Efird, Amanda Toland, Denise Lewis, Lt. Col. Christopher Phillips, Melanoma Incidence Rates in Active Duty Military Personnel Compared with a Population-Based Registry in the United States, 2000-2007. Military Medicine, 179, 3:247, 2014