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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

About DHA

The Digestive Health Alliance (DHA) is the grassroots arm of the International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders (IFFGD), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. We are a community of individuals affected by Functional Gastrointestinal and Motility Disorders (FGIMDs); digestive conditions about which little is understood and few (if any) treatment options exist. Individually, the prevalence of these diseases and disorders varies, and some can be extremely rare, but taken as a whole they impact millions of Americans. Our strength is in our numbers, and it is for this reason that we stand up together and speak out with one voice to advance science, improve patient care, and end the suffering caused by FGIMDs.

National Institutes Of Health (NIH)

Overall Investment in NIH: We support increasing funding for NIH to a level of \$35 billion in FY13. The bulk of federally supported FGIMDs research is conducted through the National Institute of Diabetes, and Digestive, and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). Increased support for NIH will enable NIDDK and other Institutes and Centers to continue to expand the FGIMD research portfolio and initiate critical new research activities focused on improving our understanding of these conditions and leading to the development of innovative treatment options.

The Functional Gastrointestinal & Motility Disorders Research Enhancement Act (H.R. 2239)

Support the *Functional GI and Motility Disorders Research Enhancement Act*: This critical piece of legislation seeks to advance our scientific understanding of FGIMDs and improve treatment options for patients by encouraging and bolstering research. This bill calls on NIH to adopt and implement the FGIMD-related research recommendations outlined by the *National Commission on Digestive Diseases*. In addition, this bill calls on NIH to partner with the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase research activities. The IFFGD urges Members of Congress to champion FGIMD research by **becoming a cosponsor of the *Functional GI and Motility Disorders Research Enhancement Act***.

Functional GI Disorders and the Military Service Connection

The onset of a functional GI disorder can be triggered by severe stress and infections of the digestive tract. Deployed military personnel face an elevated chance of experiencing these risk factors and developing a functional GI disorder due to their service. As a result, functional GI disorders are recognized by the VA as disabling and connected to military service as a part of Gulf War Illness. The DOD conducts important research into medical conditions that impact veterans and active duty military personnel through its Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).

The House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees fund the DOD CDMRP's Peer-Reviewed Gulf War Illness Research Program (GWIRP), which provides an excellent source of funding for functional GI disorders research. The GWIRP was funded at a level of \$10 million in FY 2012. Legislators must work to see that funding for the GWIRP is included in any agreement on FY 2013 Defense Appropriations.

The Pediatric Research Consortia Establishment Act (H.R. 1080)

Support and ensure passage of the *Pediatric Research Consortia Establishment Act (H.R. 1080)*: Many children suffer with painful, disabling, and in some cases life-threatening FGIMDs. Increased pediatric research is badly needed so that a life-time of discomfort and costly medical treatment can be averted by individuals affected by FGIMDs. This bipartisan legislation calls on NIH to establish 20 pediatric research consortia and fund them at up to \$2.5 million annually. This bill passed the house in the last Congress and nearly passed the Senate; **please work to ensure that this bill is passed into law during the 112th Congress.**



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