

Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs Funding for Fiscal Year 2025: Considerations for Congress

April 18, 2025

Since 1992, Congress has provided the Department of Defense (DOD) with annual appropriations explicitly for the conduct of medical research on congressionally identified topics. DOD administers these funds as the [Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs](#) (CDMRP). Some facets of fiscal year (FY) 2025 CDMRP funding may generate Member interest or constituent inquiries on how DOD is to administer these funds, and potential effects of decreased funding.

CDMRP Overview

CDMRP is a DOD program funded explicitly for biomedical research in congressionally identified medical topics. As such, it has not formed part of the President's budget request for DOD. The [U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command](#) (USAMRDC), with oversight from the [Defense Health Agency](#), administers the CDMRP and is responsible for awarding and managing competitive grants to expend these funds.

Congress usually inserts CDMRP funding in the annual DOD appropriation under the [Defense Health Program \(DHP\)](#) Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) account. Specific details on the research topics and funding amounts appropriated for CDMRP are not included in the text of the annual defense appropriations bill. Rather, they have historically been incorporated in congressional documents accompanying the annual defense appropriation act (i.e., conference reports or explanatory statements) for a given fiscal year. For example, the explanatory statement accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47), listed [38 research topics](#) eligible for \$1.5 billion in new CDMRP funding for FY2024 and provided [further guidance](#) on administering these funds. Topics and funding amounts vary year to year based on congressional prerogative.

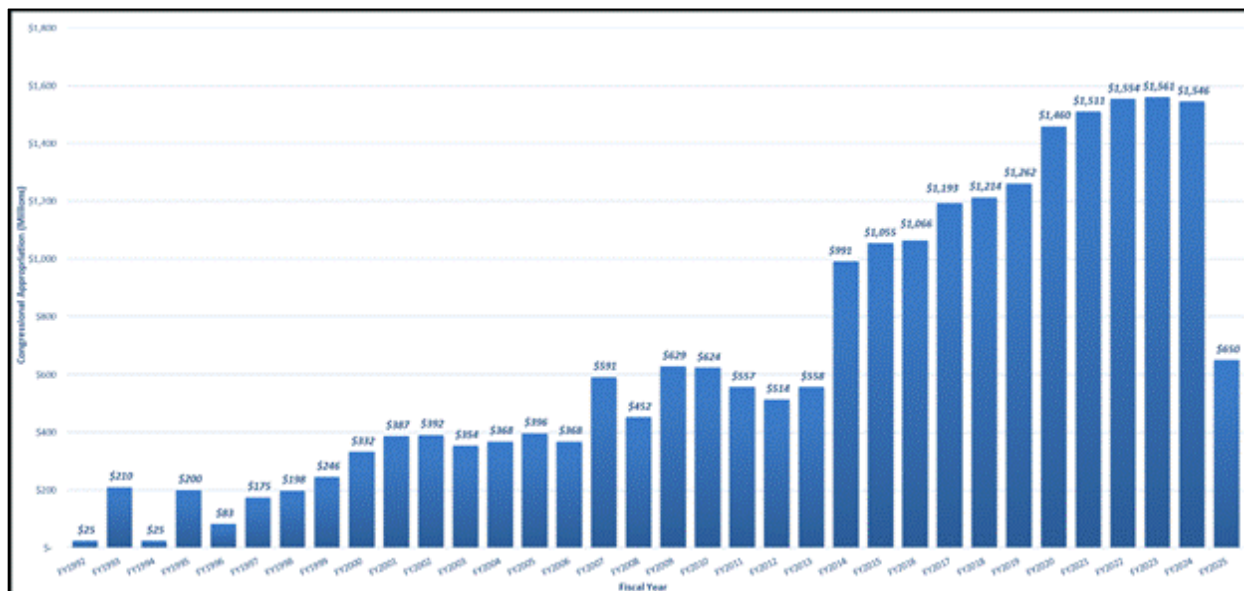
Between FY1992 and FY2025, Congress has appropriated over \$22 billion for CDMRP (see **Figure 1**).

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Figure 1. Congressional Appropriations for CDMRP, FY1992-FY2025
(in nominal dollars)



Source: CRS analysis of annual DOD appropriations acts and accompanying congressional documents, FY1992-FY2025.

Notes: Nominal dollars, not adjusted for inflation.

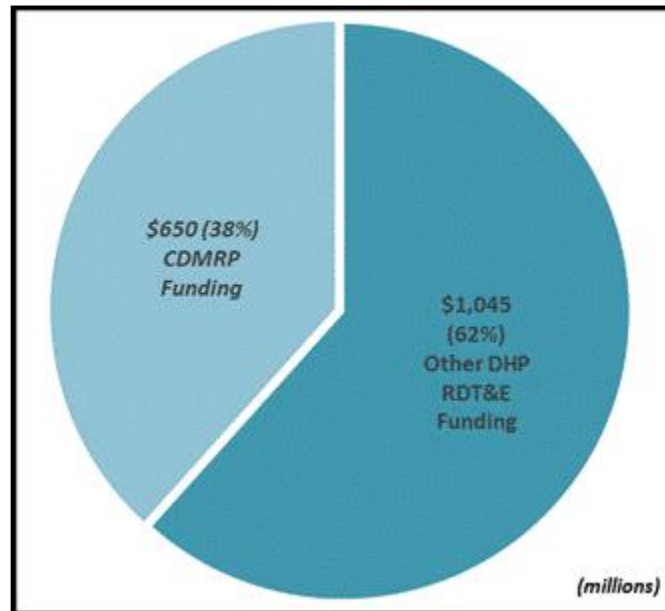
For more on CDMRP, see CRS Report R46599, *Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs: Background and Issues for Congress*; and CRS In Focus IF10349, *Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs Funding for FY2024*.

FY2025 CDMRP Funding

On March 15, 2025, Congress enacted the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4). The act, which funds U.S. government operations for the remainder of FY2025, presents certain facets to CDMRP funding that have not been observed in previous years.

- Decreased funding.** Of the approximately \$1.7 billion appropriated for the FY2025 DHP RDT&E account, **\$650 million or 38% was designated for CDMRP** (see **Figure 2**). Comparing FY2024 (i.e., \$2.9 billion) and FY2025 appropriations, funding for the DHP RDT&E account decreased by 41%, or about \$1.2 billion, while funding for CDMRP decreased by 57%, or \$859 million.
- Broad direction on research topics.** Between FY2015 and FY2024, Congress directed DOD to conduct medical research on at least 33 specific topics. For FY2025, CRS has identified no accompanying explanatory statement or conference report to P.L. 119-4 providing explicit guidance on CDMRP research topics. However, **Title IV, Section 1422**, of the act, directed DOD to submit a “spending, expenditure, or operating plan for fiscal year 2025,” not later than 45 days after enactment, to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Subcommittees on Defense. The provision also prohibits any program, project, or activity from being included in the FY2025 spending plan unless provided for in the House-passed or Senate Appropriations Committee-reported versions of an FY2025 DOD Appropriations Act (H.R. 8774, S. 4921; 118th Congress), or accompanying reports (H.Rept. 118-557, S.Rept. 118-204).

**Figure 2. Total Defense Health Program (DHP) RDT&E Appropriation
FY2025**



Source: Title IV—Department of Defense, Section 1407(1), of P.L. 119-4.

FY2025 CDMRP Funding—What’s Next?

DOD could exercise some discretion over expending FY2025 CDMRP funds in the absence of specific congressional direction. DOD’s spending plan, expected in late April 2025, may provide Congress with details on future execution of FY2025 CDMRP funding, including research topics and allocated amounts.

On March 17, 2025, the chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees [reportedly transmitted](#) a joint letter and accompanying funding table to the Secretary of Defense to “indicate congressional intent for programs, projects, and activities” for FY2025. The [funding table](#) identified 12 topics and funding amounts for CDMRP.

On March 27, 2025, [USAMRDC initially announced](#) that 12 medical research programs would be funded with FY2025 CDMRP funding. In April 2025, USAMRDC also published a list of [22 cancers eligible for FY2025 peer-reviewed cancer research](#) (i.e., Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program) and [56 medical conditions eligible for FY2025 peer-reviewed medical research](#) (i.e., Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program) funding.

Table 1 compares CDMRP topics proposed in the reports accompanying versions of an FY2025 DOD appropriations act and DOD-selected FY2025 topics and allocation amounts.

Table I. Congressionally proposed and DOD-selected CDMRP Topics for FY2025

Medical Research Topic	Proposed in H.Rept. 118- 557	Proposed in S.Rept. 118- 204	DOD-selected topic	DOD- allocated amount
Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders	X			
Alzheimer's	X	X	X	\$15.0 million
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis	X	X	X	\$40 million
Arthritis	X			
Autism	X			
Bone Marrow Failure Disease	X			
Breast Cancer	X	X	X	\$130.0 million
Combat Readiness Medical	X			
Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy	X	X	X	\$12.5 million
Epilepsy		X		
Glioblastoma	X			
Global HIV/AIDS Prevention	X			
Hearing	X			
Joint Warfighter Medical	X			
Kidney Cancer	X			
Lung Cancer	X			
Lupus	X			
Melanoma	X	X	X	\$40.0 million
Military Burn	X	X	X	\$10.0 million
Multiple Sclerosis	X			
Neurofibromatosis	X			
Ovarian Cancer	X	X	X	\$15 million
Pancreatic Cancer	X			
Parkinson's	X			
Peer-reviewed Cancer	X	X	X	\$130 million
Peer-reviewed Medical		X	X	\$150 million
Peer-reviewed Orthopedic	X			
Prostate Cancer	X	X	X	\$75 million
Rare Cancers	X	X	X	\$17.5 million
Reconstructive Transplant	X			
Spinal Cord	X			
Tickborne Disease	X			
Toxic Exposures	X	X	X	\$15.0 million
Trauma Clinical	X			

Medical Research Topic	Proposed in H.Rept. 118- 557	Proposed in S.Rept. 118- 204	DOD-selected topic	DOD- allocated amount
Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health	X			
Tuberous Sclerosis Complex	X			
Vision	X			

Source: CRS analysis of H.Rept. 118-557; S.Rept. 118-204; and CDMRP Press Release, “[CDMRP Announces Research Funding for Fiscal Year 2025](#),” updated April 7, 2025.

Notes: “X” denotes that the topic was listed in the report or selected by DOD for FY2025 funding. Congress typically uses “peer-reviewed” as a prefix nomenclature for each topic, while DOD uses the prefix for some topics. *DOD indicated that [22 topics](#) would be eligible for Peer-Reviewed Cancer funding and [56 topics](#) would be eligible for Peer-Reviewed Medical funding.

Considerations for Congress

[Some observers](#) have expressed support for continued CDMRP-funded research and have stated that FY2025 funding reductions do “a great disservice to our warfighters and veterans.” [Other observers](#) have historically viewed some CDMRP research as “irrelevant” to DOD’s mission and advocated for elimination of CDMRP’s “non-defense” topics. These perspectives, along with the facets of FY2025 appropriations, may present Congress with the following considerations relating to current- and future-year CDMRP funding.

- Should Congress continue to appropriate funding to DOD for specific medical research topics? If so, for which topics, to what extent, and according to what criteria?
- To what extent is CDMRP relevant to DOD’s mission, joint force requirements, or the health and wellbeing of servicemembers and a military-connected population?
- What are the opportunity costs and benefits for funding or defunding CDMRP?
- Should Congress provide further guidance to DOD on how FY2025 CDMRP funding is to be expended?

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