

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2009

Co-Sponsor the Mitochondrial Medicine Research and Treatment Enhancement Act

Dear Colleague:

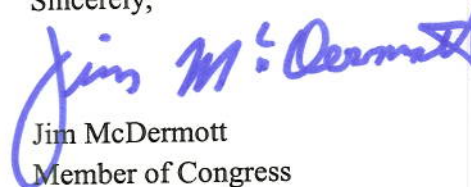
Research suggests that approximately 1 in 200 people have a mutation in their mitochondrial DNA that may lead them to develop mitochondrial disease. Children are particularly susceptible: mitochondrial disease affects between 1,000 and 4,000 children each year. Mitochondrial disease results when there is a defect that reduces the ability of the mitochondria to produce energy. When this occurs, several adverse outcomes are possible: the brain may be impaired, vision may be dim, muscles may twitch and a person may be too weak to function. Mitochondrial disease manifests itself in several ways: strokes, seizures, muscle weakness, gastrointestinal disorders, swallowing difficulties, cardiac disease, liver disease, diabetes, blindness, deafness, and increased susceptibility to infections.

To combat this disease, I ask you to consider becoming an original cosponsor of the **Mitochondrial Medicine Research and Treatment Enhancement Act**. The legislation accomplishes the following:

1. Creates a Mitochondrial Medicine Coordinating Committee within the Office of the Director of the National Institutes of Health ("NIH"), the purpose of which is to promote interdisciplinary cooperation towards improving training and education of researchers and providers on issues relating to mitochondrial disease;
2. Creates an Office of Mitochondrial Medicine within the Office of the Director of NIH;
3. Authorizes the Director of NIH to authorize five (5) awards to support research initiatives related to mitochondrial medicine; and
4. Authorizes the Director of NIH to make awards to establish Centers of Mitochondrial Medical Excellence to promote interdisciplinary research and training related to mitochondrial medicine.

I ask that you consider cosponsoring this important piece of legislation to support research in an area in which so many lives are affected.

Sincerely,


Jim McDermott
Member of Congress