

Awareness Makes a Difference: CONGRESSIONAL MITOCHONDRIAL DISEASE CAUCUS

Request

We are asking Members of Congress to join the bipartisan Congressional Mitochondrial Disease Caucus. Please have a member of your staff contact Mike Cusher with the Office of Rep. McGovern (D-MA) at Mike.Cusher@mail.house.gov to help increase awareness about mitochondrial disease and the synergies between mitochondrial dysfunction and more common diseases and health care conditions, as well as urge action to promote collaborative research into potential cures and treatments.

Background

We all have mitochondria. Mitochondria are the power house of our cells. They provide most of the energy our bodies need to see, hear, breathe, walk and talk. Children and adults with mitochondrial disease have a defect in their mitochondria that prevents their bodies from producing enough energy to power the cells resulting in organ system failure. Symptoms are extremely diverse and progressive. In some cases, mitochondrial disease is a fatal illness. There are no known treatments or cures.

While mitochondrial disease affects 1 in 4,000 people, mitochondrial dysfunction plays a larger role in human health. Research has shown that mitochondrial dysfunction is at the core of many more common illnesses and chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, osteoporosis, cancer and even the aging process. Autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis also may have a mitochondrial basis. There also is new evidence that mitochondrial dysfunction plays a role in the cause of some children's autism.

Expanding research into mitochondrial disease would not only help thousands of people afflicted by this terrible progressive illness, but it would also open new avenues of treatment to help greater than 50 million people suffering other common medical ailments.

Benefits and Objectives of the Mitochondrial Disease Caucus

The support of a robust Congressional Mitochondrial Disease Caucus will provide a forum for members of Congress and their staff to learn about mitochondrial disease and related issues including prevalence, the relationship to other illnesses, and current directions of research. The Caucus will also provide support for the efforts of agencies such as the NIH and the Department of Defense to support cutting edge research into mitochondrial disease toward the goal of developing therapies and cures for specific diseases and new insights into many major neurological disorders.

Current Congressional Mitochondrial Disease Caucus Members:

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA-02) - Chair

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-08) – Co-Chair

Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX-36)

Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12)

Rep. Brenden Boyle (D-PA-13)

Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA-27)

Rep. Christopher Collins (R-NY-27)

Rep. Doug A. Collins (R-GA-09)

Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA-11)

Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA-16)

Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA-06)

Rep. Mike Doyle (D-PA-14)

Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT-05)

Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL-11)

Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA-06)

Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA-04)

Rep. David P. Joyce (R-OH-04)

Rep. Marcie Kaptur (D-OH-09)

Rep. William Keating (D-MA-09)

Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-MA-04)

Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH-02)

Rep. Thomas MacArthur (R-NJ-03)

Rep. Richard Nolan (D-MN-08)

Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ-01)

Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA-22)

Rep. Robert Pittinger (R-NC-09)

Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO-02)

Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL-05)

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL-27)

Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH-05)

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA-28)

Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA-03)

Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI-06)

Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN-02)

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA-01)