CONFERENCE REPORT

TO ACCOMPANY

H.R. 2561

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and $75,000,000 is for the Army's peer reviewed Prostate Cancer Research Program (PCRP).

The remaining funds of $25,000,000 are to be made available for peer reviewed medical research grants and activities. The conferees direct that the Secretary of Defense, in conjunction with the service Surgeons General, establish a process to select medical research projects of clear scientific merit and direct relevance to military health.

Such projects could include: acute lung injury research; advanced soft tissue modeling; alcohol abuse prevention research; Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program; Dengue fever vaccine research; childhood asthma; diabetes; digital mammography imagining; Gulf War Illnesses; Padget's disease; retinal display technology; smoking cessation; stem cell research; and volumetrically controlled manufacturing.

The conferees direct the Department to provide a report by March 1, 2000, on the status of this peer reviewed medical research program, to include the corresponding funds provided in fiscal year 1999.

CUSTODIAL CARE

The conference agreement includes a general provision clarifying the definition of custodial care as it pertains to the delivery of health care services provided by and financed under the military health care system's case management program. This provision also sets the overall policy for access of military health care system beneficiaries in the case management program. The House bill included a similar provision. The Senate bill contained no similar provision. The conferees expect the Department to expeditiously revise its regulations to comply with this provision.

ANTHRAX VACCINE IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM (AVIP)

The Comptroller General shall study the immunization program and report on the following: effects on military morale, retention, and recruiting; the civilian costs and burdens associated with adverse reactions for members of the reserve components; adequacy of long- and short-term health monitoring; assessment of the anthrax threat, including but not limited to foreign doctrine, weaponization, quality of intelligence, and other biological threats. A classified annex may be submitted to meet this requirement.

The Department is directed to enter into a contract with the National Research Council to independently study the effectiveness and safety of the anthrax vaccine. The following issues shall be considered in the report: the types and severity of adverse reactions, including gender differences; long-term health implications; inhalational efficacy of the vaccine against all known anthrax strains; correlation of animal models to safety and effectiveness in humans; validation of the manufacturing process focusing on, but not limited to discrepancies identified by the Food and Drug Administration in February 1998; definition of vaccine components in terms of the protective antigen and other bacterial products and constituents; identification of gaps in existing research.

Preliminary reports addressing these issues will be submitted to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services of both the House and the Senate by April 1, 2000.

OXFORD HOUSE

The conferees direct the Department to conduct a pilot project to improve treatment outcomes for alcoholism and drug addiction. The pilot project should evaluate the effectiveness and cost efficiency of Oxford House recovery homes in improving recovery without relapse following treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction among active and retired military personnel and their dependents. The conferees direct the Department to provide a report by March 1, 2000 on the status of this pilot project.

TRISERVICE NURSING RESEARCH PROGRAM

The conferees recommend $6,000,000 for the TriService Nursing Research Program (TSNRP). Within these funds, the conferees encourage the Department to leverage telehealth and distance learning capabilities, and to continue efforts in developing telemetered passive physiological monitoring for field conditions. Further, the conferees encourage the Department to begin funding the TSNRP in the Department's annual budget.