

Support Alopecia Research in FY2023

Sending Office: Honorable Ayanna Pressley
Sent By: Aissa.Canchola@mail.house.gov

Dear Colleague,

Please join me in sending a letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies asking them to support much needed research into Alopecia areata at the National Institutes of Health and to prioritize report language that would provide Congress with necessary information to understand racial disparities within alopecia areata and inform efforts to support those battling with alopecia.

Alopecia areata is an autoimmune skin disease resulting in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere on the body. It usually starts with one or more small, round, smooth patches on the head and can progress to total scalp hair loss (alopecia totalis) or complete body hair loss (alopecia universalis). Alopecia areata tends to strike children and 6.9 million Americans have been, are, or will be affected by the condition. This common skin disease is highly unpredictable and cyclical. Hair can grow back in or fall out again at any time, and the disease course is different for each person. Initial research has found a higher prevalence of Alopecia areata in communities of color, but more research needs to be done.

Currently, alopecia research at NIH is supported by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases but there are also relevant Institutes such as National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the National Institute of Mental Health that can take much needed action to strengthen the research base on alopecia.

This letter urges the Subcommittee to adopt report language that would direct NIH to provide an update on key research initiatives on Alopecia areata, encourage the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities to prioritize research into the prevalence of Alopecia areata within communities of color and encourage the National Institute of Mental Health to address the mental health challenges faced by those battling with Alopecia areata.

To sign on to this letter, please use [Quill](#) by 12pm on Monday, April 25th. For any questions, please reach out to Aissa Canchola at Aissa.Canchola@mail.house.gov

Sincerely,

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

Thank you for your leadership as the Appropriations Committee considers spending priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. We write to ask the Committee to encourage and highlight research advancements and emerging opportunities in alopecia areata at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Alopecia areata is an autoimmune skin disease resulting in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere on the body. It usually starts with one or more small, round, smooth patches on the head and can progress to total scalp hair loss (alopecia totalis) or complete body hair loss (alopecia universalis). Alopecia areata tends to strike children and 6.9 million Americans have been, are, or will be affected by the condition. This common skin disease is highly unpredictable and cyclical. Hair can grow back in or fall out again at any time, and the disease course is different for each person. We have some research that has found a higher prevalence of alopecia areata in communities of color, but more research needs to be done.

Currently, alopecia research at NIH is supported by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases but there are also relevant Institutes such as National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the National Institute of Mental Health that can take much needed action to strengthen the research base on alopecia.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you incorporate the following report language in the FY 2023 Appropriations bill in order for Congress to receive much needed updates on the status of federal research regarding alopecia and the disparate impact of alopecia on black and brown communities in particular:

1. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Alopecia Areata.—The Committee notes the importance of research into autoimmune skin conditions such as alopecia areata. The Committee requests an update on key research initiatives into this condition and collaborative opportunities with key stakeholders to advance critical research projects.

2. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

Alopecia—The Committee notes the disproportionate effect of alopecia on people of color, specifically women. The Committee encourages the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities to collaborate with relevant ICs such as the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and relevant stakeholders to identify key research areas of concern.

3. National Institute of Mental Health

Alopecia—The Committee notes recent events that have highlighted the effect on an individual's mental health because of alopecia. The Committee encourages the Institute to work with key stakeholders to support research and resource development aimed at understanding this connection and opportunities for innovative discovery.

Once again, we thank you for your leadership on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bills and are eager to work with you on these incredibly important requests. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,