

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 6, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in writing to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education to express support for measures to develop safe and effective treatments for Duchenne and Becker Muscular Dystrophy (DBMD).

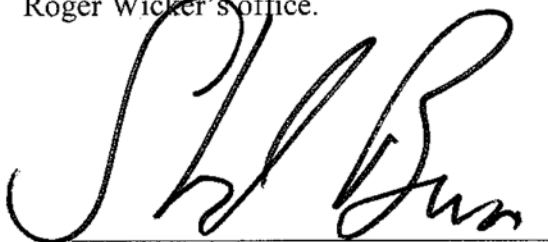
Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is the most common form of muscular dystrophy, affecting about one of every 3,500 boys. Becker is a less severe version that affects about one of every 18,000 children born each year. Duchenne is the world's most common lethal genetic disease among children, and patients typically survive only into their 20s.

Each year, scientific advances bring us closer to developing safe and effective treatments for these debilitating conditions. Thanks to previous years of federal funding, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has been able to increase research into DBMD. While DBMD barely registered on the nation's radar screen just a few years ago, today research has progressed to such an extent that a Phase 2 clinical trial for a promising, new drug is underway.

Last year, Congress authorized the Paul D. Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Community Assistance, Research, and Education Amendments of 2008. The original MD-CARE Act of 2001 brought tremendous hope and optimism to the muscular dystrophy community. Ongoing scientific research, with emphasis on translation, places us at the brink of promising clinical trials. Therapies for specific genetic mutations and drug development on validated targets suggest treatments are within reach. The reauthorization legislation will continue the momentum that has been established within the medical and research community.

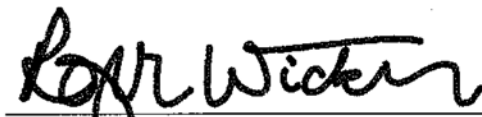
By enabling accurate prevalence and incidence rates and identifying potential participants in NIH-sponsored clinical trials, initiatives at CDC play an important role in finding treatments and cures for DBMD. In that context, we request a \$2.5 million increase in Muscular Dystrophy activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of this amount, \$2.25 million would be dedicated to advance efforts to develop and launch an International DBMD Patient Registry, and \$277,000 would be used to continue the successful CDC Education and Outreach initiative.

We need your help to ensure that this important work moves forward without delay and cures for these debilitating conditions can be found. If you would like to sign this letter or if you have questions, please feel free to contact Jessica McNiece ([Jessica\\_McNiece@Brown.Senate.Gov](mailto:Jessica_McNiece@Brown.Senate.Gov)) in Senator Sherrod Brown's office or Susan Sweat ([Susan\\_Sweat@Wicker.Senate.Gov](mailto:Susan_Sweat@Wicker.Senate.Gov)) in Senator Roger Wicker's office.



Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

Sincerely,



Senator Roger F. Wicker (R-MS)