



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

June 20, 2016

Friends of FSH Research  
217 19<sup>th</sup> Place  
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Friends,

On this, the first ever World FSHD Awareness Day, I offer you my best wishes as you gather to support a cure for FSHD and other forms of Muscular Dystrophy. I am proud that the Pacific Northwest is the home of this movement to increase awareness of FSHD and that our research institutions are leading the charge to discover better treatments and potential cures for the 500,000 people living with this disease.

In Congress, I am committed to ensuring that Washington's medical research institutions such as the University of Washington, the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and others receive the resources they need to research, test, treat, and discover smarter treatments and cures for diseases. As a proud member of the Senate National Institutes of Health (NIH) Caucus, I have consistently fought for strong investments in medical research at the NIH. For the past five years, I have called on my Senate colleagues to maintain a strong commitment to these crucial investments. Thanks to our efforts and your advocacy, Congress boosted NIH funding by \$2 billion last year, and the Senate's bipartisan health care appropriations bill for fiscal year 2017 increases NIH funding by a further \$2 billion.

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I helped write the Affordable Care Act. While the final legislation did not have everything I worked to include, I am proud that we ended insurance discrimination against individuals with pre-existing conditions. Before health reform, people without health insurance through their job struggled to find affordable policies without being discriminated against. While we have much more to do to make health care more affordable and accessible for Washingtonians, we have achieved historic progress: thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 20 million Americans are covered, and insurance companies can no longer charge them more for pre-existing conditions or terminate their policies.

Thank you all for your tremendous support of Friends of FSH Research. This incredible organization provides hope for the many families and friends of those living with FSHD. I look forward to learning more about the research you fund and the ways that Congress can assist your mission.

Warmest Regards,

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator