Advocating for the tens of millions of people in the US with neuropathy

Did you know?

Because of our advocacy work, the government has awarded $24 million for PN research—funding that would not have been possible without our efforts.

On Advocacy Day, we brought board members, people with PN, doctors, researchers and staff to meet with Congressional aids to talk about peripheral neuropathy (PN) and the urgent need for more research funding.

> I'm here to represent the veteran community and every other person suffering from peripheral neuropathy. Hopefully we can get the funds we need to fight this awful disease.
>
> Michael H.
> PN patient

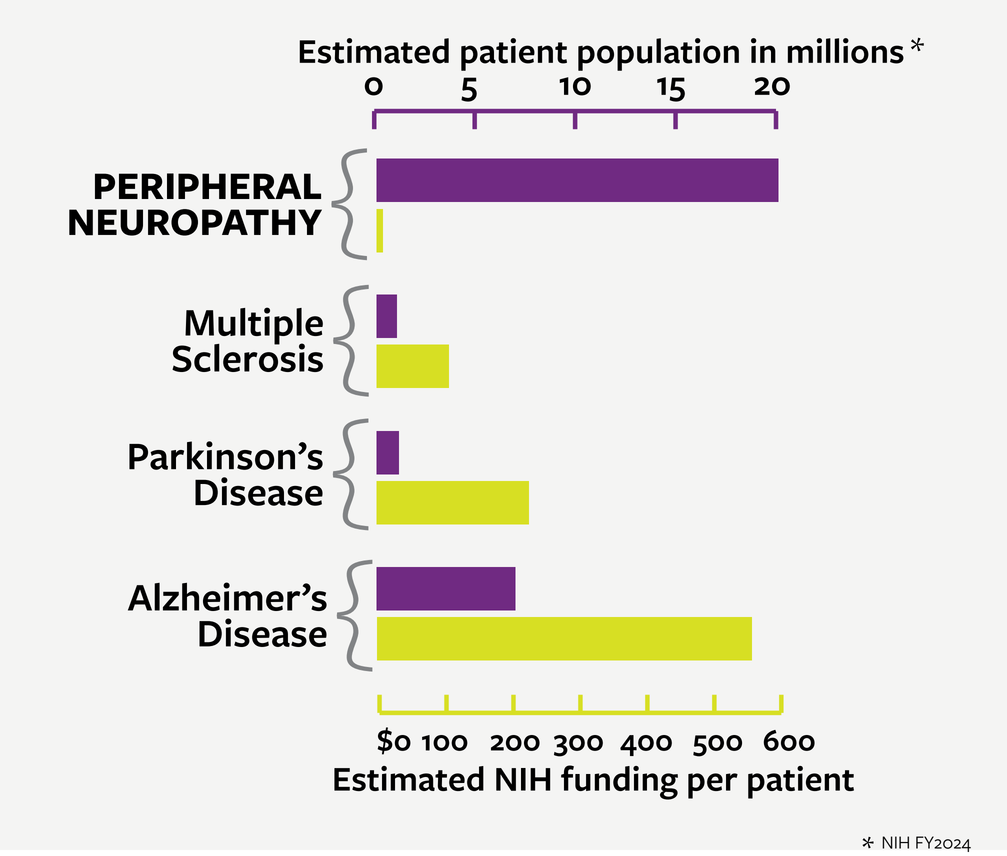
2026 **NEUROPATHY ADVOCACY DAY**

11 states represented	**22%** GROWTH OVER 2025
19 advocates for PN	**58%** GROWTH OVER 2025
34 meetings on Capitol Hill	**61%** GROWTH OVER 2025

Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy

FoundationForPN.org

The critical need for research dollars



PN is greatly "under-researched," despite affecting 30 million Americans. In 2025, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) spent less than $200 million on PN research out of its $48 billion annual budget. This is less than $7 per person living with PN.

Most PN research is funded through the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). However, because PN is closely linked to conditions like diabetes and chemotherapy, other NIH institutes like NIDDK and NCI are also involved. As a result, better coordination across NIH is urgently needed.

Fortunately, PN has been listed as an "eligible condition" under the Defense Department's Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP) since fiscal year 2021. Over the last five years, PRMRP has awarded a total of $19 million in research grants for PN. Even so, total federal support for PN research remains very limited.

REQUESTS

» Renew the PRMRP designation of "peripheral neuropathy" in the fiscal year 2027 Defense Appropriations Act

» Appropriate not less than $51.3 billion for NIH in fiscal year 2027

» Include report language in the fiscal year 2027, Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Act directing NIH to increase and better coordinate PN research across its institutes.

Foundation
for Peripheral
Neuropathy

Fiscal Year 2027 Defense Appropriations Request Including "Peripheral Neuropathy" among the eligible disorders in the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program

Appropriations Bill:
Fiscal Year 2027 Defense
Appropriations Act

Account: Defense Health Programs, RDT&E, Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs

Line: Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program

PE Number: 603115

REQUEST:

In the report accompanying the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Defense Appropriations Act, include "peripheral neuropathy" among the disorders and conditions eligible for research funding under the Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP).

Provision in previous bills: During FY 2021-2026, Congress designated peripheral neuropathy as a condition in the PRMRP in the annual Defense Appropriations Act. Most recently, the designation was renewed in the FY 2026 Defense Appropriations Act, enacted on February 3, 2026.

BACKGROUND:

Peripheral neuropathy refers to the many chronic conditions that involve damage to the peripheral nervous system, the vast communication network that sends signals between the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) and all other parts of the body. Peripheral nerves send many types of sensory information to the central nervous system (CNS). Best known are the signals to the muscles that tell them to contract, which is how we move, but there are different types of signals that help control everything from our heart and blood vessels, digestion, urination, sexual function, to our bones and immune system. The peripheral nerves are like the cables that connect the different parts of a computer or connect the Internet. When they malfunction, complex functions can grind to a halt.

Thirty million people in the United States (*source: NIH*) have been estimated to have some form of peripheral neuropathy, but this figure may be significantly higher–not all people with symptoms of neuropathy are tested for the disease and tests currently don't look for all forms of neuropathy. Neuropathy is often misdiagnosed due to its complex array of symptoms.

The disabling symptoms of peripheral neuropathy include:
» Poor balance
» Numbness in hands and feet
» Significant mobility problems
» Pain (sometimes severe)
» Sleep difficulties
» Tremors
» Muscle wasting and weakness

CONNECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

Peripheral neuropathy is common among the veterans community, particularly those diagnosed with diabetes, hepatitis C, and HIV. Cancer patients who have undergone chemotherapy treatment commonly develop peripheral neuropathy. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) presumes veterans' early-onset peripheral neuropathy is related to their exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service when the disease appears within one year of exposure to a degree of at least 10 percent disabling by VA's rating regulations.

A study of 249 Gulf War Veterans also concluded that "wartime exposure to combinations of organophosphates (Ops) and other cholinesterase-inhibiting chemicals (including nerve agents, pesticides, insect repellents, and pyridostigmine bromide) produced variants of chronic organophosphate-induced delayed polyneuropathy (OPIDP) in Gulf War veterans."

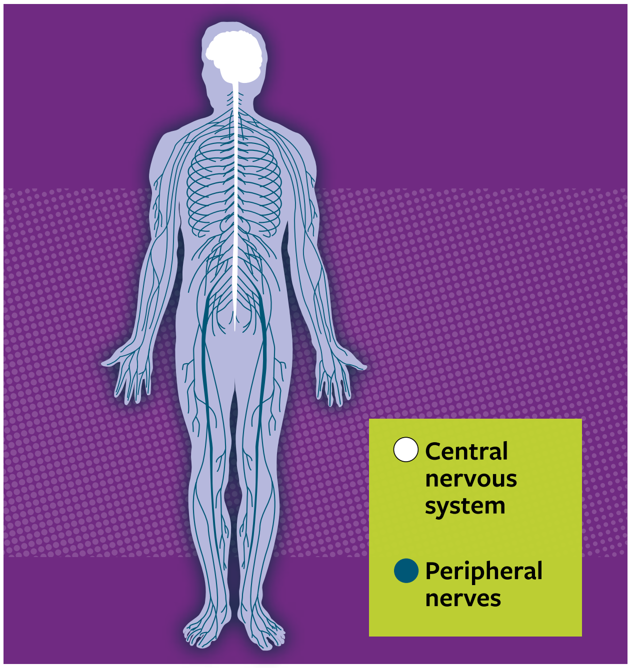
JUSTIFICATION

In fiscal years 2021-2026, Congress recognized the importance of including peripheral neuropathy in the PRMRP, largely due to the connection of the disorder to both current Armed Services members and veterans. As our veterans population continues to age, peripheral neuropathy will grow in prevalence, and new breakthroughs are needed to treat this population, as well as current members of the U.S. Armed Forces who contract the disorder. Maintaining "peripheral neuropathy" among the conditions eligible for study at the PRMRP will significantly augment the amount of limited research that DoD currently funds and will greatly accelerate our research community's efforts to find a cure for this debilitating condition.

Peripheral Neuropathy

{Per•*if*•er•al}   {Ner•op•a•thy}

The Urgent Need for More Research Dollars



What is peripheral neuropathy? (PN)

Peripheral neuropathy is a common neurological condition caused by damage to the peripheral nervous system – the network that sends signals between the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) and other parts of the body, often starting in the hands and feet.

An estimated 30 million people in the US, are affected by PN. This number is likely higher, as many people with symptoms are never tested for the disease. Further, neuropathy is often misdiagnosed due to its wide range of symptoms, which include poor balance; numbness; significant mobility problems; pain; sleep difficulties; tremors; and autonomic issues like digestion, heart rate, and respiration.

3 TYPES OF PERIPHERAL NERVES

MOTOR NERVES

control voluntary muscle movement, like walking, grasping things or talking

SENSORY NERVES

transmit information, like the feeling of a light touch, temperature or pain from a cut

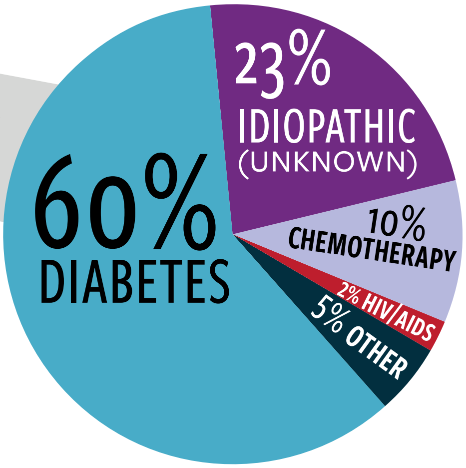
AUTONOMIC NERVES

control activities that happen automatically, like heart rate, blood pressure, digestion and sweating

Why PN research is challenging

PN is not a single disease. There are over 100 known causes, including diabetes and chemotherapy, but still a quarter of patients are labeled ***idiopathic***, meaning no clear cause is identified. Treatments vary widely and may be inconsistent or ineffective. They are also limited, and there are no cures. More research is needed to create ways to stop PN from progressing, and to regrow nerves.

What **causes** neuropathy?



Same mission,
new logo

Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy

The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy (FPN) is a 501c(3) non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for those affected by PN through research, advocacy, and education. These three areas work together to speed up the fight for better treatments and cures. FPN is the only international organization that addresses all forms of PN through these three areas, connecting patients, healthcare professionals and researchers together towards shared goals.

FoundationForPN.org