

JOAQUIN CASTRO
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March 31, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for Medicinal Chemistry Infrastructure for Hepatic Steatosis Therapeutic Development in fiscal year 2024. The entity to receive funding for this project is the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, located at 7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC7755, San Antonio, TX 78229. The funding would be used to acquire laboratory equipment and instrumentation for the Center for Innovation Drug Discovery (CIDD-HS) where new chemical synthetic techniques will be generated to discover novel treatments for hepatic steatosis.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because Hepatic Steatosis, popularly called fatty liver, is rampant in south Texas, and can culminate in cirrhosis requiring liver transplantation or liver cancer, which is essentially incurable. It is estimated that there are at least 61,760 residents living with hepatic steatosis in TX-20. Should the predicted 2.5% of cases progress to cirrhosis, then that would result in 1,544 new liver cancer cases, of which 80% will not survive five years. Worse, one out of five of the hepatic steatosis patients will progress to cirrhosis and liver failure and require a liver transplant. The sheer numbers of patients with hepatic steatosis will make this a tsunami of health care needs in the next decade. Since cirrhosis and liver cancer are so difficult to treat, the best treatment would be prevention. However, there are no drugs currently FDA approved for hepatic steatosis that change the course of the disease. A huge number of known chemical compounds have been tested for activity and found wanting. This means that new chemical structures will need to be defined that can change the course of the disease.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by section 272 of title 15, United States Code.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress