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Defense Department to Support Fragile X Research

WASHINGTON 12/23/09 – The National Fragile X Foundation applauds the United States Congress and President Barack Obama for including Fragile X Syndrome for the first time ever within a select group of conditions eligible for research funding from the U.S. Department of Defense.

The new law, signed by President Obama on December 19, designates \$50 million through the FY 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Act for the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). Fragile X is one of a select group of priority conditions that are eligible for funding under the PRMRP.

"We are thrilled that Congress and the President have recognized this need in our communities," said Robert Miller, Executive Director of The National Fragile X Foundation (NFXF). "Fragile X poses a serious challenge to families and communities everywhere, challenges that are much more acutely felt by our military families. This funding is a promise of support and a means to a better outcome for those affected by Fragile X."

Fragile X Syndrome and its associated disorders are caused by a genetic mutation on the X chromosome and impact over one million Americans. Symptoms of Fragile X Syndrome include intellectual, physical and occupational disabilities. Behavioral problems, including autism, are also common among those with Fragile X.

"As the only Member of Congress who has a child with Fragile X, I understand the true value of priority designation for this genetic disorder," said Congressman Gregg Harper (R-Miss.). "Thousands of families across America are battling this disease and this research funding opens a new chapter of hope as we continue to learn how Fragile X impacts individuals. I'm thankful for the leadership of Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi, the Ranking Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee, who helped secure these federal dollars."

The National Fragile X Foundation funds and advocates for expanded Fragile X research, supports efforts to bring best medical practices to all impacted patients and their families, and promotes public awareness and education of Fragile X. The NFXF will work closely with the DoD to leverage this new investment in research to accelerate the march toward more effective targeted treatments and eventually a cure for Fragile X.

Through a NFXF sponsored program, since 2004 nearly 1000 grass roots advocates have visited their Members of Congress, advocating for innovative research funding and awareness initiatives.

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