



Contact: Lisa Maher  
lmaher@childrenscardiomyopathy.org  
866-808-2873

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## **Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation Nominates Consumer Advocates to Participate in the Scientific Review for the DoD Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program**

TENAFLY, N.J.—November 17, 2021— The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation (CCF) nominated four individuals to serve as consumer advocates for the Department of Defense sponsored Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). Sarah Foye of New Jersey, Joseph Hillenburg of Illinois, Melissa McQueen of Arizona and Kathleen Yago of California recently participated in the evaluation of research applications submitted to the PRMRP. As a consumer reviewer, Foye, Hillenburg, McQueen and Yago were full voting members, alongside prominent scientists, at meetings to help determine how the \$370 million appropriated by Congress for Fiscal Year 2021 will be spent on peer reviewed medical research.

The goal of the PRMRP is to fund studies that improve the health and well-being of military personnel and their families with the potential to benefit all Americans. Consumer reviewers are asked to represent the collective view of patients by preparing comments on the impact of the research on issues such as diagnosis, treatment and quality of life. Foye, Hillenburg, McQueen and Yago were nominated for their commitment to research on pediatric cardiomyopathy. Foye has a family history of cardiomyopathy. Hillenburg, McQueen and Yago have children who were diagnosed with cardiomyopathy and then received a heart transplant.

COL Sarah B. Goldman, Director of the CDMRP, expressed her appreciation for the consumer advocates' hard work. "Integrating consumer perspectives into our decision-making process brings energy and focus to our research programs. Patients, caregivers, family members, and advocates help us keep our efforts centered around what is truly important to those impacted. We very much value this critical input from our consumers who help ensure that CDMRP's work remains critical and relevant," she said.

Researchers applying to the PRMRP propose to improve the health, care, and well-being of all Military Service members, Veterans, and beneficiaries. The PRMRP fills important gaps by supporting groundbreaking research while encouraging out-of-the box thinking.

### **Statement from Sarah Foye, New Jersey**

"It was an honor to serve as a reviewer. I am grateful to be a voice for families who may benefit from the research developments."

### **Statement from Joseph Hillenburg, Illinois**

"As a cardiomyopathy/transplant parent, ensuring that our perspective is heard in the selection process for medical project work is key to easing the burden for families who will undertake a journey similar to our own. It was an honor to continue serving CCF and CDMRP in this capacity."

### **Statement from Melissa McQueen, Arizona**

"I was very honored to participate as a reviewer for PRMRP on behalf of the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation. Giving the critical family voice to these reviews could make the difference between money given for life saving research happening in the critical field of cardiomyopathy."

**Statement from Kathleen Yago, California**

"Serving as a reviewer for the DoD PRMRP program feels like a call to duty to share the perspective of the lived experience of cardiomyopathy in efforts to aid in quality research that may improve the lives and outcomes for families and their children."

More information about the PRMRP is available at the website: <https://cdmrp.army.mil/prmrp/default> and background about the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation is available at [childrenscardiomyopathy.org](http://childrenscardiomyopathy.org)

**About The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation**

*The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation (CCF) is a national organization focused on finding causes and cures for all pediatric forms of cardiomyopathy. The Foundation was established in 2002 to accelerate research and education, increase public awareness and advocacy, and offer support services to affected families.*

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**2020 K Street, Suite 505 • Washington, DC 20006 • Tel 866.808.CURE • [childrenscardiomyopathy.org](http://childrenscardiomyopathy.org)**