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June 5, 2006

The Honorable Michael Leavitt
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

I am writing to in support of renewal of the charter for the Department's Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee (CFSAC), which expires on September 5, 2006. As you know, the CFSAC is a federal advisory committee that provides evidence-based advice on the current state of research on chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and research opportunities, current and proposed diagnostic and treatment methods, and the development and implementation of programs to educate the public, health care professionals, and researchers about CFS research and advances.

CFS, also called chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome, is a complex and debilitating illness that affects the brain and multiple body systems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than one million American adults and teens have CFS, costing our nation an estimated \$9.1 billion a year in lost productivity – not including medical costs.

Meetings of the CFSAC provide a vital opportunity for experts selected by the Department to hear reports from, provide input to and monitor progress of the CDC, NIH, HRSA, FDA and SSA. The CFSAC meetings also provide the patient community the opportunity to participate in these discussions and voice concerns through public testimony. The CFSAC allows for greater transparency and accountability, helping to ensure the most effective utilization of federal resources dedicated to CFS.

The CFSAC serves as an important forum for obtaining information, providing input and monitoring process on federal activities pertaining to CFS. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

E. Clay Shaw, Jr.
Member of Congress

ECS: cp