



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

San Francisco Office

SEP 22 2005

OCT 12 2005

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Action: _____

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Steven Du Pre, concerning the classification of the neuroimmune disease, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). I have shared Mr. Du Pre's comments with the CFS Research Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As I indicated in my letter to Mr. Du Pre dated October 6, 2004, and as is still the case today, there are a number of unique characteristics that differentiate ME from CFS; however, each remains difficult to define precisely, due to the broad diversity of symptoms reported by patients. Moreover, treatment of patients with ME or CFS is difficult primarily because the root cause in either case is unknown and successful treatment of any illness of unknown etiology can be challenging.

Continuing education for clinicians and health care workers may offer the best approach to ensuring that ME and CFS patients receive appropriate medical care. CDC has recently expanded its education and outreach activities related to CFS through a cooperative agreement with the Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS) Association of America organization. Recent experience has shown that the interest level of physical therapists and nurse practitioners/physician assistants in addressing the syndrome is quite high. These individuals are likely to have more contact with patients than the primary medical provider, thus allowing more in-depth and patient-directed care.

I appreciate you bringing the concerns of Mr. Du Pre to my attention. I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,


Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director