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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 24, 2011

Dear Colleague,

Osteoporosis and other related bone diseases are omnipresent in our nation—affecting people of all ages, ethnicities, and gender. They profoundly alter the quality of life and constitute a tremendous burden to patients, their families, society and the economy—causing loss of independence, disability, pain and death. Undoubtedly you represent constituents with one of these conditions so I invite you to join in cosponsoring the Bone Health Promotion and Research Act.

About 10 million Americans suffer from osteoporosis, and another 34 million people have low bone density, placing them at risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures in the future. The disease is responsible for more than 2 million fractures annually, including broken hips, spines, wrists, and other bones. Staggering data: researchers tell us 1 in 2 women and up to 1 in 4 men over age 50 will break a bone because of osteoporosis, and an average of 24 percent of hip fracture patients age 50 and older will die in the year following their fracture. The number of osteoporosis-related fractures is expected to rise to more than 3 million by 2025.

While you may not have heard of them, other bone diseases can be equally devastating. Osteogenesis imperfecta or “brittle bone disease” is an inherited genetic disorder. Fragile bones can fracture easily, often from no apparent cause. A severely affected child begins fracturing before birth and can expect a lifetime with hundreds of broken bones. Paget’s disease of bone is a geriatric disorder that results in enlarged and deformed bones, pain, and an overall decrease in bone strength and an increase in susceptibility to bowing of limbs and fractures. The costs to our nation are significant. A recent report found that annual direct and indirect costs for bone and joint health amount to \$849 billion.

And while research progress to date has clearly been impressive and drugs are available to treat some of the disorders, there is still no cure for any of the numerous diseases and conditions that affect the skeleton. Depending on the disease however, the opportunity to build on recent discoveries for new treatments, cures and preventive measures has never been greater.

The Bone Health Promotion and Research Act will enhance our nation’s federal research enterprise, providing new support for scientific studies, as well as prevention, education and surveillance efforts. I invite you to cosponsor this legislation to help the millions of patients (and their families) suffering from bone diseases, as well as the physicians and healthcare providers who treat them, and the scientists searching for cures.

For more information, or to become a cosponsor, please contact Karina Cabrera via email at [karina\\_cabrera@gillibrand.senate.gov](mailto:karina_cabrera@gillibrand.senate.gov) my office at (202) 224-4451.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senator