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Support Rehabilitation Research at NIH

Recognizing the need for greater attention in the areas of rehabilitation science, Congress established, in 1990, the National Center on Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the world's premier medical research agency. While NCMRR has played a key role in advancing rehabilitation research at NIH since its founding, the Center's funding and influence should be enhanced.

Understanding the critical function of rehabilitation research, NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Director Alan Guttmacher convened a Blue Ribbon Panel comprised of thirteen scientists and tasked them with reviewing rehabilitation research at NIH. In December of 2012, the Panel made recommendations that aim to improve and increase support for rehabilitation research, particularly at NCMRR.

AOTA Position:

AOTA urges support for The Rehabilitation Improvement Act of 2013 (S. 1027), a bill to improve, coordinate, and enhance rehabilitation research at the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) at NIH.

As NIH continues to consider the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Tim Johnson (D-SD) have moved to advance legislation that would, if passed, encourage implementation of the recommendations and codify into law many of the Panel's key concerns.

The Rehabilitation Improvement Act of 2013 (S. 1027) seeks to enhance the coordinating capacity of NCMRR within NIH and allow for interagency agreements on rehabilitation research efforts; establish a working group tasked with updating and streamlining rehabilitation research priorities within NIH; and require a report on the feasibility of implementing the recommendations proposed in the Blue Ribbon Panel report.

In the current fiscal climate, it is important to note that S. 1027 would make important advancements for rehabilitation research without authorizing or requiring new spending; thus it would not add to our nation's deficit.

Please cosponsor The Rehabilitation Improvement Act of 2013 (S. 1027) today, and help the world's premier medical research agency realize the full benefit of a robust and collaborative rehabilitation research environment.