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Combined Sections Meeting

January 21-24, 2013
San Diego, CA

APTA Conference 2013

June 26-29, 2013
Salt Lake City, UT

May 29, 2013

The Honorable Mark Kirk
U.S. Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kirk:

On behalf of the American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) 85,000 members, we would like to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Rehabilitation Improvement Act, (S. 1027). We believe this legislation will improve, enhance, and increase much needed coordination of rehabilitation research efforts at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

APTA believes that rehabilitation research significantly advances the mission of the NIH to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.

This important legislation further complements the recently released final report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH by creating a working group to streamline this research and by allowing new inter-agency agreements to exist. APTA applauds you for also ensuring that the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel will be further reviewed through the feasibility study contained in this measure.

APTA supports the spirit of the Blue Ribbon Panel findings that rehabilitation research needs greater investment, coordination, and strategy to meet the growing need for rehabilitation services, such as physical therapy, and the value of these services to advance the health of our citizens.

APTA believes the greatest goal is to empower individuals with impairments and disabilities and improve their lives so they can become fully active members of their communities. We are hopeful that the recent introduction of S. 1027 together with your continued support and leadership will help spur greater awareness for investment and focus in this space and offer hope and opportunity for millions of patients suffering from disabilities.

APTA will continue to work closely with your staff to advance rehabilitation research at the NIH, and other federal agencies involved in disability and rehabilitation research, as well as the private sector.

We thank you for your efforts on rehabilitation research and look forward to working together on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Rockar Jr." in a cursive script.

Paul A. Rockar, Jr, PT, DPT, MS
President

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