

DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH COALITION

1501 M STREET, N.W. SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

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PATIENT AND CLINICAL ORGANIZATIONS STRONGLY SUPPORT PASSAGE OF THE CHAIRMAN'S MARK OF S. 800 INTRODUCED BY SENATORS KIRK (R-IL) AND BENNET (D-CO) TO ENHANCE MEDICAL REHABILITATION SCIENCE AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Washington, D.C.: Members of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC) commended the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) for advancing a modified version of S. 800, the "Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH Act" to improve, coordinate, and enhance medical rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Introduced by Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Michael Bennet (D-CO), the bill is enthusiastically supported by the DRRC membership because the time is now to enhance the stature and visibility of medical rehabilitation research at the world's premier medical research agency.

We applaud the efforts by Senators Kirk and Bennet to include in the bill many of the recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Medical Rehabilitation Research established by NIH in December 2012. We are particularly supportive of the provisions in the bill designed to enhance strategic coordination within the Director's office at NIH and with other agencies to update and streamline rehabilitation research priorities. We also support the provisions in the bill which specify that the Research Plan must be updated every five years following a scientific conference or workshop; provide for progress reports; and include a definition of medical rehabilitation research that reflects the importance of an individual's ability to improve their functional status after illness or injury.

We urge the Senate HELP committee and full Senate to pass S. 800 and send the bill to the House of Representatives to enact H.R. 1631 as revised by the Senate. Passage of these companion bills send a powerful message that our Nation can and must improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and chronic conditions by enhancing medical rehabilitation research at NIH and, by so doing, improve the provision of rehabilitation services and devices.

The DRRC is a coalition of 40 national non-profit organizations committed to improving the science of rehabilitation and disability. The DRRC seeks to maximize the return on the federal investment in rehabilitation and disability research with the goal of optimizing the health and function and quality of life of persons with injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions.

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DRRC Steering Committee

American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Brain Injury Association of America

DRRC Member Organizations

American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Orthotists & Prosthetists
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Foundation for the Blind
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Amputee Coalition of America
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Child Neurology Foundation
Child Neurology Society
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Lakeshore Foundation
March of Dimes
Mental Health America
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics & Prosthetics
National Association of Rehabilitation Research Training Centers
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations
National Council on Independent Living
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Paralyzed Veterans of America
RESNA, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
The Arc
Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation
United Spinal Association