



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congressional Briefing on the Importance of Rehabilitation

**Washington D.C. - June 22, 2011** A Congressional Briefing on “The Importance of Rehabilitation in America’s Healthcare System” will take place at 12:30 p.m. on June 23, 2011 in the US Capitol Visitor Center HVC 200 (lunch at Noon). “The Importance of Rehabilitation in America’s Healthcare System” intends to highlight for policymakers how valuable rehabilitation services and devices are for people who sustain injuries, have disabilities or chronic conditions. “Rehabilitation and habilitation services and devices are critical to the well being of healthcare patients, including children with developmental and intellectual disabilities and wounded warriors returning from service to our country,” emphasized Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Co-Chair of the House Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus. “Our briefing is meant to highlight the importance of providing effective rehabilitation services within our healthcare system.”

The briefing is designed to illustrate the positive impact rehabilitation can have on the health, functional status and ability of Americans with disabilities to live independently in their homes and communities. “Rehabilitation services and devices should be a priority in our healthcare system,” commented Congressman Jim Langevin, Co-Chair of the House Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus. “By providing these services in a timely and appropriate manner, we can reduce long term costs to the system and improve the quality of care for individuals with disabilities across the lifespan.”

Featured speakers at the congressional briefing include:

- **Gerard Francisco, MD, Chief Medical Officer, TIRR Memorial Hermann**  
Chairman of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Brain Injury Fellowship Director, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston:  
Dr. Francisco is the attending rehabilitation physician for Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and will speak to the value of rehabilitation services and therapies.
- **Paul Tobin, President and CEO, United Spinal Association:**  
Mr. Tobin is a U.S. Navy veteran and will address the unique rehabilitation and assistive technology needs of veterans and others.
- **Jeanne Wilcox, PhD, Professor of Speech and Hearing Science, ASU**  
Director and Founder, Infant Child Research Programs, Arizona State University:  
Dr. Wilcox will speak to the importance of habilitation services for children with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers and Congressman Langevin will give closing remarks for the briefing, which is sponsored by the ITEM Coalition, the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Health Task Force, and the Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation in collaboration with the House Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus.

“With states considering cuts to Medicaid services and with the Department of HHS drafting a regulation on the essential health benefits package in a reformed healthcare system, it is imperative that policymakers understand the critical nature of rehabilitative services and devices for millions of people,” explained Peter W. Thomas, JD, CCD Health Task Force co-chair. “These services enable persons to function independently at home and within their community after having sustained injuries or if they have a disability or chronic condition.”

The [ITEM Coalition](#) is a national consumer-led coalition devoted to raising awareness and building support for policies which enhance access to assistive devices that help people with disabilities and chronic conditions live independently at home and in the community. The [Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities](#) is a coalition of approximately 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. [The Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation](#) is a coalition of national consumer, clinician and membership organizations with the goal of preserving and improving access to rehabilitation services.

Please contact Theresa Morgan for more information about the briefing at 202-349-4243 or at [Theresa.Morgan@ppsv.com](mailto:Theresa.Morgan@ppsv.com).

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