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Rehabilitation and Disability Groups Applaud Comprehensive Evidence-Based Stroke Rehabilitation Guidelines

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation, comprised of the nation’s leading patient and rehabilitation organizations, participated today in a Congressional Briefing on the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s (AHA/ASA) first-ever evidence-based guidelines for optimizing the rehabilitation and recovery of stroke survivors. The comprehensive guidelines, which include 227 recommendations in 41 clinical categories and span 73 pages with over 900 references, are the latest, evidence-based recommendations for stroke rehabilitation care. With nearly 800,000 Americans experiencing a stroke each year, the rehabilitative care a patient receives is critical to their ultimate recovery. The AHA/ASA’s guidelines are a product of the tireless work of a panel of stroke clinicians and researchers and are considered the seminal set of guidelines to address the recovery and rehabilitation of stroke survivors.

Presenting the guidelines were AHA/ASA volunteers Carolee Winstein, Ph.D., PT, FAPTA, Chair of the Guidelines Panel and Vice President of the American Society of Neurorehabilitation, and Joel Stein, MD, Vice Chair of the Panel and a physiatrist and member of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R). The two-hour briefing included a panel discussion that debated the policy implications of these guidelines, the barriers to their implementation, and gaps in the research base. One of the highlights of the briefing came from stroke survivor, Frank “Chip” Celestino, M.D., who told of his long but successful journey back from a serious stroke several years ago.

Dr. Stein summarized one of the chief findings in the guidelines by stating, “Comprehensive, coordinated, inter-professional care is essential in stroke rehabilitation, and these guidelines capture those important principles to outline how we can best treat and help patients recover from stroke.”

Mary Beth Walsh, MD, CEO and Executive Medical Director of Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, a panelist at the briefing representing the American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA), said, “These guidelines speak to the importance of multiple aspects of stroke care, from the inpatient rehabilitation hospital experience—which the guidelines conclude is so critical to good outcomes following stroke—through home and community-based care. We anticipate they will fundamentally transform the care of stroke patients, and lead to improved patient outcomes across the country for years to come.”

“As the voice for millions of Americans who acquire brain injuries each year including stroke, we applaud the focus that these guidelines bring to outcomes that matter most for each individual patient,” said Susan Connors, President and CEO of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA). “Survivors and their families finally have a reliable, comprehensive source to guide them through recovery and rehabilitation after sustaining this debilitating brain injury.”

Wayne Gordon, Ph.D., ABPP-CN, FACRM, of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine, stated, “Not only will these guidelines help improve the standard of stroke care in multiple clinical settings, but they also identify areas in need of further research that will continue to refine future iterations of these guidelines.”

The briefing took place in the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center on Thursday, October 6, 2016. The event was organized by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. A copy of the guidelines can be accessed [here](#). Supporting organizations of the briefing included the following:

American Academy of Neurology (AAN)
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R)
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN)
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM)
American Music Therapy Association (AMTA)
American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
American Society of Neurorehabilitation (ASNR)
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA)
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN)
Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA)
Center for Medicare Advocacy (CMA)
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics (NAAOP).

For further information about this event or the guidelines, please contact Leif Brierley at Leif.Brierley@ppsv.com or 202-466-6550.

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CPR is a coalition of national consumer, clinician, and membership organizations that advocate for policies to ensure access to rehabilitative care so that individuals with injuries, illnesses, disabilities and chronic conditions may regain and/or maintain their maximum level of health and independent function. The CPR Steering Committee includes the Center for Medicare Advocacy, the United Spinal Association, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Brain Injury Association of America, and the Falling Forward Foundation.