

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS

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May 4, 2017

The Honorable Andy Barr
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

SUBJECT: H.R. 1565, the Saving Lives, Saving Costs Act

Dear Representative Barr,

On behalf of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), we appreciate your efforts to improve our country's medical-legal system and thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 1565, the "Saving Lives, Saving Costs Act."

As high-risk specialists, neurosurgeons know only too well how the current system falls short. Consider the following:

- Forty-four percent of neurosurgeons have reported that they limit the type of patients they treat, with 71 percent no longer performing aneurysm surgery, 23 percent no longer treating brain tumors and 75 percent no longer operating on children.
- On average, neurosurgeons are sued every two years, although most of these cases are dropped or resolved in favor of the neurosurgeon.
- Two-thirds of neurosurgeons report ordering imaging or other tests solely to minimize the risk of lawsuits; thus driving up the costs of defensive medicine.
- Neurosurgeons pay the highest professional liability insurance premiums of all physician specialties, typically in excess of \$100,000 per year.

We applaud your legislation's innovative approach, which would provide a legal safe harbor for physicians who can demonstrate that they followed recommended clinical practice guidelines developed by their medical professional societies. Organized neurosurgery has an extensive and robust process for developing, evaluating and endorsing clinical practice guidelines. As such, we believe that it is essential to ensure that guidelines developed and endorsed by the AANS and CNS would be used as the marker by which neurosurgeons seeking the protections of your bill would be measured. Different organizations may arrive at alternative treatment conclusions, and we want to avoid at all costs a "battle of the guidelines." It appears that your bill addresses our concerns on this point, but we nevertheless wanted to share with you our views on this subject.

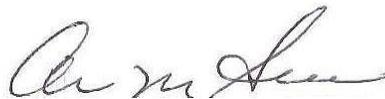
The AANS and CNS firmly believe that passing sensible medical liability reforms will help ensure that patients have timely access to quality health care, and your legislation is a step in the right direction.

We look forward to working with you to advance the bill. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Alex B. Valadka, MD, President
American Association of Neurological Surgeons



Alan M. Scarrow, MD, President
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