

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS

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September 27, 2017

The Honorable Marco Rubio
United State Senate
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

SUBJECT: S. Res. 252, Designating September 2017 as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”

Dear Senator Rubio,

On behalf of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), we would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude for introducing and providing the leadership necessary to secure passage of S. Res. 252, designating September 2017 as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month.” There is an urgent need to increase education and research investment to improve outcomes for victims of spinal cord injury (SCI) and improve their quality of life. Hopefully your resolution will have focused more attention on these crucial efforts.

As you are aware, more than 285,000 individuals in the United States live with SCI, with 17,500 new injuries occurring each year. These devastating injuries ultimately cost society billions of dollars in health care costs and lost wages. Adding to these costs include the hospital readmission of 30 percent of persons with SCIs with an average length of stay of 22 days. Even more unfortunately, most of these injuries occur in teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25.

Working together with the ThinkFirst Foundation, which was originally established under the leadership of the AANS and CNS in 1986, neurosurgeons continue to promote research-validated education programs that have reached millions of young people nationally and worldwide. The foundation’s network of chapters and volunteers have influenced public policy initiatives and continue to expand to reach those most vulnerable to traumatic injuries — our children, teens and young adults.

We look forward to working with you further on these efforts and applaud you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

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

Alan M. Scarrow, MD, President
Congress of Neurological Surgeons

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