

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS

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CONGRESS OF  
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April 11, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**SUBJECT: S. 527, the Health Care Safety Net Enhancement Act**

Dear Senator Blunt:

On behalf of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), we are pleased to support your legislation, S. 527, the Health Care Safety Net Enhancement Act of 2017.

If enacted, this bill will address the growing crisis in access to emergency care by extending liability protections through the Federal Tort Claims Act to on-call and emergency physicians. Specifically, the bill would ensure that emergency department and on-call providers who are delivering medical services under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) receive the same liability coverage currently extended to employees of Community Health Centers and health professionals who provide Medicaid services at free clinics.

As on-call specialists, neurosurgeons perform lifesaving feats every day, often making quick, life-and-death decisions with minimal information about the patient. This lifesaving care is inherently risky and exposes these specialists to an increased likelihood of litigation because emergency and trauma patients are often sicker, have more serious complications and usually have no pre-existing relationship with the emergency physician or the on-call specialist. Unfortunately, the high-risk of being sued and the increased professional liability costs — which are far higher than for those who do not provide such care — have reduced the pool of on-call specialists to dangerously low levels.

Congress must act now to protect access to emergency care for all Americans, insured and uninsured alike. We thank you for your continued leadership and look forward to working with you to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Frederick A. Boop, MD, President  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons

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

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