Senators Sponsor Bill To Increase Awareness And Research For Musculoskeletal Diseases

WASHINGTON, Aug. 4 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- On Thursday, , the Access to America's Orthopaedic Services Act of 2009 (AAOS Act), S. 1548, was introduced in the United States Senate by Senators Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) and Richard Burr (R-NC).

This introduction, the first of its kind in the Senate, marks a historical victory for the orthopaedic community. S. 1548 compliments legislation already introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives Gene Green (D-TX) and Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX).

"Congress has a responsibility to act to increase educational and training efforts, identify gaps in access to care, and help standardize accreditation for specialized care and transplants," Senator Cardin said.

The AAOS has long championed this legislation, which will bring greater awareness and promote research and new surgical methods to orthopaedic surgeons.

"This is an important development for the orthopaedic community and our patients," said AAOS Council on Advocacy Chair, Peter J. Mandell, M.D.. "We commend Senators Cardin and Burr for their leadership on improving the ability of patients to access affordable, quality orthopaedic care."

The budget-neutral AAOS Act offers solutions to lowering the cost of treating bone and joint conditions -- with a current annual domestic price tag of $849 billion.

"The effects of musculoskeletal disease can be physically debilitating and very painful for patients. It also costs our nation billions of dollars each year in treatment and care. As a large number of Americans get older, good bone health will need to be a top priority for our country. I'm pleased to work with the AAOS and Senator Cardin on this important legislation," said Senator Richard Burr.

The AAOS Act focuses on key areas within orthopaedic care, such as:

-- Trauma and Rehabilitation. The AAOS Act will coordinate current musculoskeletal trauma research among government agencies to improve the nation's trauma treatment and network models.

-- Musculoskeletal Research. The AAOS Act will encourage diversity among young and underrepresented investigators in the field of orthopaedic surgery.

-- Women's Health. The Office on Women's Health will be asked to launch an

educational campaign, "Powerful Bones, Powerful Girls," for young women (ages 9-12) about the importance of bone health and osteoporosis prevention.

-- Aging and Seniors. The AAOS Act supports an education campaign on musculoskeletal disease targeting the public and health professionals and would encourage states to develop or expand activity programs for seniors.

-- Pediatrics. The Surgeon General will be required to report to Congress on the incidence of childhood musculoskeletal diseases and barriers to accessing orthopaedic care for children within two years.

-- Workforce and Training. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will be requested to conduct a study on graduate medical education and the impact of funding on the availability of specialty physicians.

-- Quality and Safety. The AAOS Act reauthorizes the Transplantation Transmission Sentinel Network administered by the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) through a grant allocated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All companies engaged in the manufacture of human, cellular, tissue or tissue-based products will be required to become accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation agency.

-- Healthy America. The Department of Health and Human Services will be asked to conduct studies on the causes of severe trauma to extremities resulting from vehicular crashes. Additionally, the legislation requires the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) to promote a coordinated effort to collect information on causes of workplace musculoskeletal injuries in an effort to develop preventative measures.

"Bone loss, joint pain, and debilitating trauma are among the many forms of musculoskeletal diseases and conditions that are the leading causes of disability in the United States today. Such problems account for more than one-half of all chronic conditions in people over 50 years old. Despite such widespread affliction, there is an inherent lack of awareness in the public and the medical community about bone and joint health. It's costing us billions of dollars each year in medical and hospital costs, work loss, and outright pain," said Senator Cardin.

It is the hope of the orthopaedic community that these measures will increase awareness of musculoskeletal conditions, greatly enhance the lives of Americans and provide long-term health care savings.

"Those of us in the orthopaedic community appreciate this renewed focus on musculoskeletal issues and our continued effort to improve the level of care for our patients," Dr. Mandell said. SOURCE American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Source URL (retrieved on *12/09/2013 - 1:23am*):
http://www.surgicalproductsmag.com/news/2009/08/senators-sponsor-bill-increase-

awareness-and-research-musculoskeletal-diseases?qt-recent_blogs_articles=0