

Eli's Rehab Report

News Briefs: Congress Turns Attention to Veterans in Need of PT

Physical therapists may soon have good incentive to work for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Reps **Stephanie Herseth Sandlin** (D-SD) and **John Boozman** (R-AR) recently introduced HR-6792 Veterans Physical Therapy Services Improvement Act of 2008, according to an Aug. 5 press release from the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). In short, this bill will improve the recruitment and retention of physical therapists in the VHA.

"The combination of men and women returning every day from Iraq and Afghanistan with complex impairments and an aging veteran population has created a shortage of physical therapists in the VHA," **Herseth Sandlin** said, also mentioning the VHA's need to keep pace with the modern advancements in physical therapy services.

The legislation will establish a Director of Physical Therapy Service position that will report to the Under Secretary of Health, to ensure that as the profession advances, the VHA keeps current with issues related to the profession's education, qualifications, clinical privileges and scope of practice, APTA said.

Incentives: The legislation will also create a new fellowship program for physical therapists in the areas of geriatrics, amputee rehabilitation, polytrauma, and rehabilitation research.