There is no question that public awareness with respect to traumatic brain injury (TBI) has increased tenfold in the last few years. TBI is now associated with the Formula One driver involved in a skiing accident; the NFL player who committed suicide last year and was diagnosed with Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) post-mortem; the Congresswoman who survived a gun-shot wound; and as well as the seasoned journalist who sustained a head injury while reporting on the Iraqi conflict. There are head injuries that also have a less public profile, such as your neighbor’s kid who sustained a concussion while playing baseball, or your elderly father-in-law who sustained a subdural hematoma when he fell on the bathroom floor.

The second Wednesday of each March is designated as Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill. The celebration is initiated by the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF), a bi-partisan caucus led by Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (NJ-D) and Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-R). This well-attended event brings federal and national organizations together, allowing for networking among state peers and national leaders.

Last year panelists covered such diverse topics as: promoting medical education on brain injury across the VA hospitals; educating about the prevalence of soldiers returning from deployment with diagnoses of TBI and PTSD; teaching older adults tai chi to reduce accidents; training 350,000 athletic coaches nationally to recognize concussion symptoms; studying the value of administering neuro-protective agents (progesterone infusion) to individuals in the emergency department. This year, panelists are scheduled to discuss employment challenges and re-integration into the workforce post-TBI.

Concurrently this season, the TBI Act of 2013 is set to reauthorize the TBI Act of 2008 and continue brain injury research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The bill is expected to provide for state grants administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help families access much needed rehabilitation and long-term services.

HRSA is additionally expected to provide grants to states for the protection and advocacy of individuals with TBI. Finally, the bill will elevate grant programs within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in order to better coordinate with federal agencies that oversee long-term services and supports available to individuals with other disabilities.

In December of 2013, the Act was advanced out of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and is now seeking a passing vote in the Office of Appropriations. Yet, as one may be reflecting on all of these exciting developments, an e-blast sent from the Brain Injury Association of America describes a new initiative in Congress on how to offset the cost of Medicare physician fee schedule by reducing funding and restricting access to rehabilitation services.
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www.ProgressinRehabilitationResearch.org

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Improving lives
Your Program Committee has been hard at work evaluating the Instructional Courses and symposia submitted for the ACRM 91st Annual Conference in Toronto from 7 – 11 October 2014. No need to worry, there is still time to submit your abstract for scientific papers and posters, due 31 March 2014!

We will have non-stop content in six major areas: brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, neurodegenerative disease, cancer, and pain. We will also have some exciting new events such as a session on the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and an early career physicians’ course. If you have any questions regarding the program committee, please reach out to Margo Holen, Chief Meetings Officer at mholen@ACRM.org.

Are you interested in obtaining CMEs/CEUs for your profession? ACRM will offer two new accreditations in 2014 for health care executives and dieticians. Attendees may now choose to earn Continuing Education Credit in their choice of 11 disciplines, including:

- Physician (ACCME)
- Nurse (ANCC)
- Case Manager (CCM)
- Rehabilitation Psychology (APA Division 22)
- Certified Rehab Counselors (CRCC)
- Occupational Therapy (AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™)
- Physical Therapy (AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™)
- Speech Pathologist (ASHA)
- Disability Management Specialist (CDMS)
- Health Care Executives (ACHE)
- Dieticians (CDR)

We are eagerly planning the ACRM Mid-Year Meeting at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. We are so grateful that they are willing to host this important working meeting from 10 – 13 April 2014. If you are planning to attend, don’t forget to register for the working groups and committee meetings so that we can plan for your participation and book your hotel reservation at the Intercontinental Buckhead Atlanta at http://bit.ly/ACRMreservations.

Our exhibitor list is getting larger and larger but we need your help. Please send any potential manufacturers or distributors of rehabilitation equipment or pharmaceuticals to Jenny Richard, Director of Member Services and Community Relations at jrichard@ACRM.org. I am sure you can imagine potential exhibitors who would want to have conversations with the top rehabilitation researchers and clinicians who attend ACRM.

There is a new partner with ACRM in the Netherlands call the Dutch Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (DCRM). This initiative is led by Past President, Tamara Bushnik. We plan to have some reciprocity of speaker slots for our annual conference in Toronto with members of the DCRM. The DCRM hopes to engage with the Early Career Development Course to enhance their learning to incorporate a similar model in the Netherlands. Tamara Bushnik will be the keynote speaker for the DCRM 2014 conference. More formally, Tamara and I will serve on the ACRM-DCRM scientific committee for their 2015 conference in Rotterdam. Allen Heinemann will be the keynote speaker for this meeting.

Finally, we are focusing on broader oversight of our financial investments and have started a new sub-committee of the Executive Finance Committee to review our investment policy semi-annually. This group is led by Gary Ulicny and includes a group of CEOs and directors for leading institutions.

Sue Ann Sisto, PT, MA, PhD, FACRM
ACRM President 2013 – 2015
Stony Brook University
Deborah Backus, PT, PhD is director of multiple sclerosis research at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Backus is an experienced physical therapist, educator, and researcher dedicated to improving functional and health outcomes for people with neurological injury or disease, specifically multiple sclerosis (MS) and spinal cord injury (SCI). She received her BS in physical therapy in 1986, and her PhD in neuroscience in 2004.

Dr. Backus’ research efforts are focused in two areas related to improving the health and function of people with MS and SCI. As part of the Eula C. and Andrew C. Carlos MS Rehabilitation and Wellness Program at Shepherd Center, she is focusing on the assessment of the health and wellness needs for people with varying stages of MS, and the evaluation of rehabilitation and exercise interventions that may be beneficial to people with MS.

Her second area of focus is gaining a better understanding of the impact of activity-based interventions on recovery of upper limb function in people with movement control problems due to MS and SCI. Dr. Backus’ clinical experience combined with her research interests have fueled a passion for facilitating the translation of evidence into clinical practice, including influencing clinicians in practice, payers for reimbursement of evidence based interventions, and policy makers related to health policy. Dr. Backus has presented both nationally and internationally, and has also published related to this work.

**ACRM Hits the Road**

Determined to tell the world about ACRM and the 91ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE in Toronto, the ACRM Membership Team is hitting the road. Equipped with a beautifully redesigned exhibit booth and exciting prizes to give away, they’ll be easy to spot at your next professional conference. Be sure to stop by and say hello, and take the opportunity to introduce a colleague to ACRM.

**BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF KANSAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 27 – 28 MARCH IN OVERLAND PARK, KS**
Featuring ACRM Bi-ISIG Chair, Dr. Lance E. Trexler as keynote speaker presenting “Return to Work after Brain Injury.” Stop by the ACRM information table to receive a special attendee discount to participate in one of this year’s Cognitive Rehabilitation Trainings:
- 16 – 17 August at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- 7 – 8 October at the ACRM 91st Annual Conference, Progress in Rehabilitation Research

**AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 3 – 5 APRIL IN BALTIMORE, MD.**
Visit booth #358 and enter to win a $50 Apple gift card.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NEUROLOGY ANNUAL MEETING: 28 APRIL – 1 MAY IN PHILADELPHIA, PA.**
Stop by booth #405 and enter to win a $50 Apple gift card.
The Fellows of ACRM Committee is currently seeking nominations for candidates for the designation of “ACRM Fellow.”

The Fellow of ACRM designation recognizes individuals who make significant contributions to the field of medical rehabilitation and to the ACRM. Fellows may use the acronym “FACRM” after their name to identify the achievement. The ACRM Board of Governors will review the applications of all qualified candidates and make final decisions for acceptance.

ACT NOW!
NOMINATIONS FOR 2014 FELLOWS OF ACRM
ARE DUE 1 JUNE 2014

NOMINATION PROCEDURE
To nominate a colleague deserving of this honor, please visit the ACRM website for details and to access the Nominations Form at http://www.ACRM.org/about/fellows?id=138.

All nominations and requested documentation must be received by 1 June 2014. Self-nominations are also welcomed. A list of all Fellows of ACRM is available for your review at http://www.ACRM.org/about/fellows.

2013 ACRM FELLOWS

- Flora Hammond, MD, FACRM
- Mike Jones, PhD, FACRM
- Cindy Harrison Felix, PhD, FACRM
- Virginia M. Mills, MS, PT, CCM, FACRM
- Ronald T. Seel, PhD, FACRM
- Lance E. Trexler, PhD, HSPP, FACRM
- Leighton Chan, MD, MPH, FACRM

Dr. Fofi Constantinidou Receives Experienced Researcher Award

Fofi Constantinidou, PhD, chair of the ACRM International Networking Group, recently received the 2013 EXPERIENCED RESEARCHER AWARD presented by the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation. The award was presented by the president of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, during a formal ceremony.

Dr. Constantinidou is a professor of language disorders and clinical neuropsychology and director of the Center for Applied Neuroscience (CAN) at the University of Cyprus. She was recognized for her work on the Neurocognitive Study for the Aging, a longitudinal project with Cypriot adults over the age of 65.

This large-scale project with more than 500 participants, integrates neuropsychological, psychosocial, and biological data to quantitatively assess the exact contribution of modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors to cognitive decline, the development of theoretical models of cognitive reserve, and the contribution of neurocognitive training to cognitive health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the project visit the CAN website at http://can.ucy.ac.cy/index.php/clinical-trials.
BI-ISIG Gears Up for a Productive Mid-Year Meeting

Lance E. Trexler, PhD, HSPP, FACRM
Ex-Officio Board Member
Chair, BI-ISIG

JOIN US IN ATLANTA — home of the Braves, the Georgia Aquarium, the Varsity, and hip-hop capital of the South

The 2014 ACRM Mid-Year Meeting offers exciting opportunities for every ACRM member looking for ways to become involved, get connected, and make a difference in the field of rehabilitation medicine. Task forces and the Executive Committee of the Brain Injury Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group (BI-ISIG) will be there, as well as the International Networking Group, the Spinal Cord Injury Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group (SCI-ISIG), the ACRM Communications Committee, and the new Pain Rehabilitation Group.

For the ACRM BI-ISIG, this small, casual meeting is the perfect time and place to advance our goals. Our mission is to promote and advance the knowledge and practices of rehabilitation specialists and other professionals concerned with the rehabilitative management of persons with brain injury and their families. The group has grown in recent years to more than 530 members and provides opportunities for networking with other professionals engaged in brain injury rehabilitation, identifying and promoting research priorities, and working with leaders in the field of rehabilitation research.

As a unique opportunity, the BI-ISIG offers membership in one or more of its task forces that address specific areas in BI rehabilitation research and practice. We currently have eight active task forces including: Cognitive Rehabilitation, Community-Based Treatment, Disorders of Consciousness, Girls and Women with ABI, Long-Term Issues, Mild TBI, Pediatric and Adolescent, and Prognosis after TBI.

New this year, the Mid-Year Meeting will be hosted by ACRM Institutional Member, Shepherd Center, in Atlanta, Georgia, offering a unique glimpse of one of the nation’s top rehabilitation hospitals. Meetings are scheduled from Thursday, 10 April through Sunday, 13 April 2014. It is an informal “working” meeting that allows task forces to share progress and plans made since the last meeting and to meet as a group to conduct work that may be difficult to accomplish via teleconference.

The ACRM Mid-Year Meeting agenda is designed to allow most participants to fly in on Thursday afternoon and leave mid-to-late-afternoon on Saturday to minimize hotel costs. Every effort has been made to minimize conflicting meeting schedules to allow most attendees to participate in their top priority task force meetings.

ACRM has negotiated a group hotel rate at the InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta through 24 March. Please book your room early as we anticipate this room block will sell out.
THURSDAY, 10 APRIL 2014

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Health Policy Networking Group

FRIDAY, 11 APRIL 2014

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM BI-ISIG Executive Committee (by invitation only)
8:30 AM – 11:15 AM BI-ISIG Mild TBI Task Force
8:30 AM – 12:00 PM International Networking Group
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM BI-ISIG Prognosis after TBI Task Force
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM BI-ISIG Community-Based Treatment Task Force
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM BI-ISIG Girls & Women with ABI Task Force
11:45 AM – 12:15 PM James Shepherd, Founder of Shepherd Center, History of the Center & Developing a Patient-centered Culture
12:15 PM – 1:30 PM BI-ISIG Business Meeting
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Communications Committee
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM BI-ISIG Cognitive Rehabilitation Task Force
1:30 PM – 5:00 PM BI-ISIG Disorders of Consciousness Task Force: Family Educational Materials
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM SCI-ISIG Business Meeting
3:30 PM – 5:00 PM BI-ISIG Pediatric & Adolescent Task Force

SATURDAY, 12 APRIL 2014

8:00 AM – 11:30 AM BI-ISIG Disorders of Consciousness Task Force: Case Definition of Acute Confusion
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM BI-ISIG Cognitive Rehabilitation Task Force: Systematic Review
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM BI-ISIG Task Force Chairs Meeting (by invitation only)
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM BI-ISIG Community-Based Treatment
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM BI-ISIG Pediatric & Adolescent Task Force: Workgroup
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM Board of Governor’s Meeting (by invitation only)
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM Pain Rehabilitation Group: “Kick-Off Meeting”

SUNDAY, 13 APRIL 2014

8:30 AM – 3:00 PM Board of Governor’s Meeting (by invitation only)

ACRM MID-YEAR MEETING

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Shepherd Center

Hosted by ACRM Institutional Member, Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Georgia, the 2014 ACRM MID-YEAR MEETING offers a chance to see what’s new at one of the nation’s top 10 rehabilitation hospitals. Meet your ACRM work group colleagues face-to-face to tackle priority projects and renew professional connections.

JAMES SHEPHERD WELCOMES ACRM On Friday, 11 April, SHEPHERD CENTER will provide a complimentary box-lunch for all attendees and an opportunity to hear the founder of Shepherd Center, James Shepherd, speak about the history of the center and developing a patient-centered culture.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS A small block of hotel rooms is available at the InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta at the ACRM group rate of $189 per night (regularly $279) through 24 March. A government rate is also available. Reserve your room early to secure the best rate at the most convenient location. BOOK YOUR ROOM: http://bit.ly/ACRMreservations or call +1.404.946.9121 and request the ACRM group rate.

ACRM HOSTED BY SHEPHERD CENTER

ACRM MID-YEAR MEETING

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**MORE:** [WWW.ACRM.ORG/COG](http://WWW.ACRM.ORG/COG)
ANNOUNCING...

A NEW CHAIR FOR THE SCI-ISIG

SUSAN CHARLIFUE, PhD, FACRM

By Deborah Backus, PT, PhD

The SCI-ISIG is excited to announce that Susan Charlifue, PhD has assumed the position of SCI-ISIG Chair. Susie has served specifically as chair-elect for the past three years and has been instrumental in increasing membership in the SCI-ISIG and SCI programming at the ACRM Annual Conference.

Susie joined Craig Hospital in 1976 and completed her doctorate in health and behavioral science at the University of Colorado, Denver in 2004. She is co-principal investigator SCI Model System at Craig Hospital in addition to coordinating several SCI research clinical trials. She is the principal investigator for both NIDRR and Department of Defense SCI grants. Since 1990, Susie has managed and completed seven major investigations of aging with SCI in the US and Great Britain.

She also serves on the Executive Committee of the International SCI Data Sets. Susie is chair of the Scientific Committee of the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCos) and a member of the Editorial and Education Committees of ISCOS. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Spinal Injury Association. Susie serves on the editorial boards for the journals Spinal Cord and Topics in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation and on the board of the Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Trust Fund.

Since 1987, Susie has been an active member of ACRM. She is a member of the International Networking Group, has served on the Awards Committee, and in the SCI-ISIG as chair of the Caregiver Task Force and as chair-elect. She was recognized as a Fellow of ACRM in 2012. With all her experience and energy, we know the SCI-ISIG will go even farther. We are excited to have her at the helm!
This is your opportunity to nominate a deserving colleague, or even yourself, to be recognized for outstanding contributions made to rehabilitation medicine and the ACRM. Nominations will be accepted through 28 March 2014 for the following prestigious awards.

The DEBORAH L. WILKerson EARLY CAREER AWARD recognizes an ACRM Early Career member who is within five years of completing training. Winners of this award are chosen for their significant contributions to rehabilitation research, made in the same enthusiastic spirit as Deborah Wilkerson. Speaking from her own experience at ACRM, Dr. Wilkerson said, “The personal and professional reward for me have been enormous, and I hope we can attract more young researchers into this opportunity.” For more details, visit http://www.ACRM.org/about/awards/deborah-wilkerson-award.

The EDWARD LOWMAN AWARD honors ACRM members whose careers reflect an energetic promotion of the spirit of interdisciplinary rehabilitation. Nominations must include a statement describing how the nominee’s positions and activities qualify her/him for this particular honor. For more details, visit http://www.ACRM.org/about/awards/edward-lowman-award.

The MITCHELL ROSENTHAL MID-CAREER AWARD recognizes mid-career ACRM members for their leadership and significant contributions made to brain injury rehabilitation research. For more details, visit http://www.ACRM.org/about/awards/rosenthal-mid-career-award.

The DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD honors an ACRM member who has provided extraordinary service to the development and functioning of ACRM as a member or chair of a committee, task force, ISIG, or networking group, and exemplifies public service. For more details, visit http://www.ACRM.org/about/awards/distinguished-member-award.

How to Submit a Nomination
http://www.ACRM.org/about/awards
Researchers, Clinicians, Industry, and Consumers Unite to Tackle Reimbursement Issues in Spinal Cord Injury

By Deborah Backus, PT, PhD

The SCI-ISIG convened in Orlando during the 2013 ACRM Annual Meeting to embark on a discussion that transcends various disciplines pertaining to out-of-pocket costs and third party reimbursement driving access to rehabilitation services, equipment and technology for persons with SCI. Moderator, Jennifer French of Neurotech Network, led panelists in providing diverse perspectives from industry, clinical/administration, and consumer to include, respectively:

- **Scott Simcox, MEE**, Chief Technology Officer of Restorative Therapies
- **Mary Schmidt-Read, PT, DPT, MS**, SCI Program Director and Coordinator of Research, Director of NeuroRecovery Network, Magee Rehabilitation Hospital
- **Kim Anderson-Erisman, PhD**, Research Associate Professor and Director of Education, Miami Project to Cure Paralysis.

The influence of research on the reimbursement process was the focus of the discussion to highlight examples of how research has impacted the reimbursement of clinical services or equipment with successful outcomes. Mary Schmidt-Read led this topic by providing examples of how the services provided through the NeuroRecovery Network are packaged to meet reimbursement guidelines from third party-payers when they are otherwise traditionally denied.

On the contrary, Scott Simcox provided the industry perspective of how the simple term of “more research is needed” may be used as the basis for denial of services or equipment. He also discussed how industry relies on research to help consumers gain access to complex equipment.

Finally, Kim Anderson-Erisman provided a key example of how she personally used research within the appeal process to make a case for her need to access an ultralight wheelchair. Kim showcased how self-advocacy, use of available resources, and an understanding of the appeal process are needed within the SCI population. Each case provided insight as to how research influences financial access to clinical services and equipment.

Open discussion with attendees allowed for diverse input on key issues that influence the financial access and review processes. One topic highlighted during the discussion was clinical practice guidelines and standards of care, the development of these guidelines and the process length and expense of updating them.

In addition, the lack of use of these guidelines overall was identified as a barrier to their effectiveness, and the need for other mechanisms of translation of guidelines into practice was briefly discussed. The funding of incremental research opened the topic of the influence of funding agencies, as well as the need for more research related to comparative effectiveness.

The discussion of advocacy in the reimbursement process provided further understanding of the influential role of published research, clinical professionals, industry assistance and consumer self-advocacy, and how each can help to gain access to essential services and equipment for people with SCI.

This discussion was an important step toward fostering relationships between clinicians and researchers in order to influence reimbursement decisions and positively impact future outcomes for the spinal cord injury population. Financial impact is a key consideration in the decision-making process related to access to complex rehabilitation equipment and dynamic clinical services, and consumers should be able to actively participate in this process.

This group of researchers, clinicians and clinical administrators, industry representatives, and consumers expressed the need to work cohesively to advance rehabilitation research and care for people with SCI, with specific focus on evidence influencing reimbursement decisions. How can the research community impact clinical practice, clinical services and financial access?

Although the group conceded that the answer is not “black and white,” all were enthusiastic that the discussion has been initiated in an open forum, and that ‘further research is needed.’ Be on the lookout for a continuation of this discussion during the ACRM Annual Conference in 2014.
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ACRM Award Nominations DUE: 28 March
http://www.ACRM.org/about/awards

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