# POLICY & PRACTICE

## AAN Pushes Congress on NIH, Stroke

The American Academy of Neurology is lobbying lawmakers on the National Institutes of Health's funding and stroke prevention and treatment legislation. In March, the House passed H.R. 477, which would create an educational campaign to promote stroke prevention and early treatment, provide grants for stroke and traumatic injury training programs, and create a 5-year pilot project to improve stroke outcomes via telemedicine. However, a bill containing similar provisions (S. 3297) saw no action in the Senate. AAN is working with the American Heart Association to get the stroke provisions added to any legislation that may move forward in the Senate before Congress adjourns for the year. AAN also is calling on Congress to pass a supplemental funding bill this fall that would increase the current NIH budget.

## Mass. Brain Injury Settlement

This summer, brain injury patients and their advocates settled a class action lawsuit that alleged the state was violating the Americans with Disabilities Act by failing to provide adequate community services for individuals with brain injuries. As a result, Massachusetts will create two new waiver programs to help brain injury patients make the transition from nursing facilities to community living. These programs will help 200-250 people move out of nursing facilities each year. The state also will improve community services for brain injury patients.

## Wanted: Female Neurosurgeons

Women currently make up only 5.9% of practicing neurosurgeons in the United States, even though women made up more than half of the students accepted to medical school in 2005, according to a paper from Women in Neurosurgery, an advocacy and networking group. The group researched recruitment and retention of female neurosurgeons at the request of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (doi:10.3171/JNS/2008/109/9/0377). Women in Neurosurgery proposed identifying and eliminating any discriminatory practices in the recruitment of medical students, the training of residents, and the hiring and advancement of neurosurgeons. The group advised promoting women into leadership positions within organized neurosurgery and fostering the development of female neurosurgeon role models.

**—Mary Ellen Schneider**

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"MPO imaging could be useful to screen susceptible individuals in the presymptomatic stage, leading to earlier treatment to decrease neurodegeneration and consequent morbidity. In addition, in established MS patients, MPO imaging could be used to better match clinical symptoms to improve relapse detection as well as more accurate temporal monitoring of active disease and therapeutic response."

***Dr. Caselli's comment:*** The ability to image active neuroinflammation in MS would be a major advance. Dr. Chen presents compelling data in murine EAE, but human trials are clearly still needed. The application for MS is indeed important, but might an agent that images MPO active lesions also prove to be useful in other inflammatory brain disorders (for example, CNS vasculitis, limbic encephalitis, and others)? Imaging the pathophysiologic process of inflammation in patients with MS is reminiscent of the ability to image amyloid in patients with Alzheimer's disease (using PIB-PET). An important question that has arisen in the latter group regards the specificity of these newly visualized abnormalities, and similar questions and insights may arise as we learn not only the sensitivity, but also the specificity of MPO imaging abnormalities. ■

*Clinical perspective by* DR. CASELLI, *chair of neurology at the Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale, Ariz., and professor of neurology at the Mayo Medical School, Rochester, Minn.*

*Research reports by Jeff Evans, senior writer.*

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