

38 USC 7327: Centers for research, education, and clinical activities on complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries

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PART V-BOARDS, ADMINISTRATIONS, AND SERVICES

CHAPTER 73-VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION-ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

SUBCHAPTER II-GENERAL AUTHORITY AND ADMINISTRATION

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§7327. Centers for research, education, and clinical activities on complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries

(a) PURPOSE.-The purpose of this section is to provide for the improvement of the provision of health care services and related rehabilitation and education services to eligible veterans suffering from complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries through-

(1) the development of improved models and systems for the furnishing by the Department of health care, rehabilitation, and education services to veterans;

(2) the conduct of research to support the provision of such services in accordance with the most current evidence on multi-trauma injuries; and

(3) the education and training of health care personnel of the Department with respect to the provision of such services.

(b) DESIGNATION OF CENTERS.-(1) The Secretary shall designate an appropriate number of cooperative centers for clinical care, consultation, research, and education activities on combat injuries.

(2) Each center designated under paragraph (1) shall function as a center for-

(A) research on the long-term effects of injuries sustained as a result of combat in order to support the provision of services for such injuries in accordance with the most current evidence on complex multi-trauma;

(B) the development of rehabilitation methodologies for treating individuals with complex multi-trauma; and

(C) the continuous and consistent coordination of care from the point of referral throughout the rehabilitation process and ongoing follow-up after return to home and community.

(3) The Secretary shall designate one of the centers designated under paragraph (1) as the lead center for activities referred to in that paragraph. As the lead center for such activities, such center shall-

(A) develop and provide periodic review of research priorities, and implement protocols, to ensure that projects contribute to the activities of the centers designated under paragraph (1);

(B) oversee the coordination of the professional and technical activities of such centers to ensure the quality and validity of the methodologies and statistical services for research project leaders;

(C) develop and ensure the deployment of an efficient and cost-effective data management system for such centers;

(D) develop and distribute educational materials and products to enhance the evaluation and care of individuals with combat injuries by medical care providers of the Department who are not specialized in the assessment and care of complex multi-trauma;

(E) develop educational materials for individuals suffering from combat injuries and for their families; and

(F) serve as a resource for the clinical and research infrastructure of such centers by disseminating clinical outcomes and research findings to improve clinical practice.

(4) The Secretary shall designate centers under paragraph (1) upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health.

(5) The Secretary may designate a center under paragraph (1) only if the center meets the requirements of subsection (c).

(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR CENTERS.-To be designated as a center under this section, a facility shall-

(1) be a regional lead center for the care of traumatic brain injury;

(2) be located at a tertiary care medical center and have on-site availability of primary and subspecialty medical services relating to complex multi-trauma;

(3) have, or have the capacity to develop, the capability of managing impairments associated with combat injuries;

(4) be affiliated with a school of medicine;

(5) have, or have experience with, participation in clinical research trials;

- (6) provide amputation care and rehabilitation;
- (7) have **pain management** programs;
- (8) provide comprehensive brain injury rehabilitation; and
- (9) provide comprehensive general rehabilitation.

(d) **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.**-The Secretary shall provide each center designated under this section such resources as the Secretary determines to be required by such center to achieve adequate capability of managing individuals with complex multi-trauma, including-

- (1) the upgrading of blind rehabilitation services by employing or securing the services of blind rehabilitation specialists;
- (2) employing or securing the services of occupational therapists with blind rehabilitation training;
- (3) employing or securing the services of additional mental health services providers; and
- (4) employing or securing additional rehabilitation nursing staff to meet care needs.

(e) **COOPERATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.**-(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may assist the Secretary of Defense in the care of members of the Armed Forces with complex multi-trauma at military treatment facilities by-

- (A) making available, in a manner that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers appropriate, certified rehabilitation registered nurses of the Department of Veterans Affairs to such facilities to assess and coordinate the care of such members; and
- (B) making available, in a manner that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers appropriate, blind rehabilitation specialists of the Department of Veterans Affairs to such facilities to consult with the medical staff of such facilities on the special needs of such members who have visual impairment as a consequence of combat injury.

(2) Assistance shall be provided under this subsection through agreements for the sharing of health-care resources under section 8111 of this title.

(f) **AWARD OF FUNDING.**-Centers designated under this section may compete for the award of funding from amounts appropriated for the Department for medical and prosthetics research.

(g) **DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.**-(1) The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that information produced by the centers designated under this section that may be useful for other activities of the Veterans Health Administration is disseminated throughout the Administration.

(2) Information shall be disseminated under this subsection through publications, through programs of continuing medical and related education provided through regional medical education centers under subchapter VI of chapter 74 of this title, and through other means.

(h) **NATIONAL OVERSIGHT.**-The Under Secretary for Health shall designate an appropriate officer to oversee the operation of the centers designated under this section and provide for periodic evaluation of the centers.

(i) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**-(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the centers designated under this section amounts as follows:

- (A) \$7,000,000 for fiscal year 2005.
- (B) \$8,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2008.

(2) In addition to amounts authorized to be appropriated by paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, the Under Secretary for Health may allocate to each center designated under this section, from other funds authorized to be appropriated for such fiscal year for the Department generally for medical and for medical and prosthetic research, such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health determines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section.

(Added Pub. L. 108-422, title III, §302(a)(1), Nov. 30, 2004, 118 Stat. 2383 .)

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN THE MITIGATION, TREATMENT, AND REHABILITATION OF TRAUMATIC EXTREMITY INJURIES AND AMPUTATIONS

Pub. L. 110-417, [div. A], title VII, §723, Oct. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 4508 , as amended by Pub. L. 114-92, div. A, title X, §1079(d)(2), Nov. 25, 2015, 129 Stat. 999 , provided that:

"(a) **IN GENERAL.**-The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly establish a center of excellence in the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

"(b) **PARTNERSHIPS.**-The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly ensure that the center collaborates with the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, institutions of higher education, and other appropriate public and private entities (including international entities) to carry out the responsibilities specified in subsection (c).

"(c) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**-The center shall have the responsibilities as follows:

- "(1) To implement a comprehensive plan and strategy for the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

"(2) To conduct research to develop scientific information aimed at saving injured extremities, avoiding amputations, and preserving and restoring the function of injured extremities. Such research shall address military medical needs and include the full range of scientific inquiry encompassing basic, translational, and clinical research.

"(3) To carry out such other activities to improve and enhance the efforts of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations as the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs consider appropriate."

DESIGNATION OF CENTERS

Pub. L. 108-422, [title III, §302\(b\)](#), [Nov. 30, 2004](#), 118 Stat. 2385 , provided that: "The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall designate the centers for research, education, and clinical activities on complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries required by section 7327 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 30, 2004]."