THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

JUN 1 2007

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This interim is in response to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, House Report 109-452, that requests the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive and systematic approach for the identification, treatment, disposition, and documentation of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in combat and peacetime.

Clinical practice guidelines and a field expedient tool for the identification and treatment of TBI in the field were established and fielded in August 2006. The Army and Marine Corps sent out all-hands messages during the same period to alert and educate Service members and leaders about identification and management of TBI, as well as its operational impact. An expert panel that included nationally known experts in TBI, as well as medical providers with recent front-line experience, convened in November 2006 and, with minor revisions, affirmed those guidelines and the tool, called the Military Acute Concussion Evaluation.

Under my office's direction, the Department, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs, is building on the significant TBI efforts of the various Services to develop a single, comprehensive Departmental program to address TBI. Planning meetings to bring together all of the relevant stakeholders are scheduled for May and June. We intend to ensure a uniform and comprehensive approach to TBI across Services and Departments. The ultimate goal is to ensure our affected service members receive the best possible diagnosis, treatment, and outcome for this serious issue. I expect to issue by the end of the year a final report recounting the results of the meetings and the DoD's comprehensive program to identify, treat, and document TBI in the military.

Thank you for your continued support of the Military Health System.

Sincerely,

S. Ward Casscells, MD

Sir,
I gave Gary
Leeling an overview
+ would be happy
to brief you.
V/R,
Ward

cc:
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member