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May 21, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Pitts
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Upton, Pallone, Pitts, and Green:

The American Brain Coalition strongly supports the inclusion of Section 1122 – National Neurological Diseases Surveillance System in the 21st Century Cures Act. We applaud this important component to the bill that would create a surveillance and data storage system through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track the incidence and prevalence of neurological diseases, both somatic and psychiatric.

The American Brain Coalition is a non-profit organization comprised of some of the United States' leading professional neurological, psychological, psychiatric and brain research associations and patient organizations. Together, we seek to advance the understanding of the functions of the brain, and to reduce the burden of nervous system disorders through public advocacy.

Neuroscientists are making great strides in many areas of brain research, but we need more information. It is estimated that neurological diseases – Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, psychiatric disorders and more – affect up to 50 million people in the United States. However, we don't have a great deal of the essential information to assist those who research, treat, and provide care to those suffering from these diseases in our communities. This bill would provide accurate data to researchers not only on incidence and prevalence, but also data on risk factors, how diagnosis and treatment varies by gender, ethnicity, and region, and how these trends change over time.

We thank you for including this provision in the 21st Century Cures Act. We hope that the data collected as a result of this section will revolutionize our understanding of brain diseases and provide critical information to researchers as they work to develop new treatments and cures.

Thank you again for your continued support of medical researchers and those living with both physical and psychiatric neurological diseases.

Sincerely,

Robin Elliot, Chair
American Brain Coalition

Cc: Representatives Michael Burgess, Chris Van Hollen and Diana DeGette