

April 18, 2008 - Murtha Dedicates Walter Reed Regional Anesthesia & Acute Pain Medicine Clinic

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, dedicated today the Regional Anesthesia & Acute Pain Medicine Center at Walter Reed Army Medical Clinic (WRAMC) in Washington, D.C.

At Walter Reed, Dr. (Col) "Trip" Buckenmaier is changing the way we treat pain. His approach targets pain regionally using high-tech nerve-blocking techniques. These new procedures block the nerve signals from a specific part of the body, such as a limb, so patients cannot feel pain in that area. Unlike general anesthesia, regional anesthesia leaves the patient awake and helps speed recovery time by managing pain.

"The Army Regional Anesthesia & Pain Management Initiative is transforming the military's approach to pain both on the battlefield and here at home," said Murtha. "We have been successful at treating pain as a symptom -- we must now defeat it as a disease."

On October 7, 2003, Dr. Buckenmaier performed the first continuous nerve block placed on a soldier. Sergeant Brian Wilhelm (Retired) was injured in Iraq by a rocket-propelled grenade and volunteered to undergo the procedure. Wilhelm spoke today about how the procedure left him pain-free and awake while doctors amputated his left leg and repaired his injuries.

This nerve block procedure is being administered 8-10 times per day and on over 2,000 patients annually for breast, orthopedic, vascular and other surgical procedures. Dr. Buckenmaier is partnering with Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown, PA to apply this procedure to the civilian management of pain.

For additional information, please visit:

<http://www.army.mil/-news/2008/04/14/8470-new-pain-management-clinic-to-open/>

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=26412>