



Finding Answers... Improving Lives

Securing sufficient support for clinical research is an ongoing challenge for most grant-making organizations, many of which compete for scarce funds. Last year, OREF and NREF, the American Association of Neurosurgeons' Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation, agreed to join forces toward raising more funds for clinical spine research.

Last November, the two organizations cofounded the Collaborative Spine Research Foundation (Collaborative Spine) to "advance the science and practice of the highest quality spine care through the collaborative funding and support of clinical research." The new foundation is led by a board of directors with equal representation from orthopaedics and neurosurgery, including OREF trustees **Richard J. Haynes, MD** and **James D. Heckman, MD**, who was elected by the Collaborative Spine board to serve as its first chair.

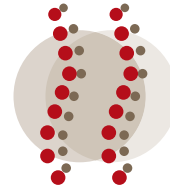
Now, barely a year later, Collaborative Spine is preparing to

A NEW POSTURE

OREF and NREF
launch a unified
effort to fund
CLINICAL
SPINE RESEARCH

publish its top-10 list of clinical spine research priorities, part of its North American research agenda for spine care. Like the Foundation itself, the research agenda is a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort, led by a 32-member Advisory Council comprising representatives from clinical and academic medicine, the research community and industry, including medical technology, health services and insurance organizations. The agenda-setting process also included a public invitation to all interested parties to complete an online questionnaire.

Dr. Heckman reported that the Collaborative Spine board was very pleased with both the content and



Collaborative Spine
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Partnering to advance clinical spine research

scope of input offered. "We received more than 140 recommendations for which clinical spine research questions are most urgent," he said. "All questions were considered on a par basis and contributed to a rich dialogue among the members of the Research Agenda Advisory Council and our board."

Now that the research agenda is finalized, the next step is to meet with potential funders. "We've been encouraged by our consultations, begun in January, with medical technology, insurance and other companies that benefit from advances in spine care," explained Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer **Charles L. Branch Jr., MD, FAANS**. "As spine surgeons, we know all too well the critical need to bring the most effective treatments to our patients. We're ready to move forward."

For more information about Collaborative Spine, please visit www.csrfoundation.net. ■