Welcome/Introductions
Dr. Barrett thanked all for attending and introduced herself, the Vice Chair, and the Section Liaison.

Approval of Minutes
The minutes from the April 2014 meeting were unanimously approved.

Section Member Update
The section currently has 550 members.

Section Strategic Plan
Drs. Barrett and Drubach are working to update the Strategic Plan and asked for volunteers to assist. The plan can be updated in as much or as little detail as the group sees fit. Interested members should email Dr. Barrett or Dr. Drubach.

2016 Annual Meeting Course and INS Proposals
The deadline for 2016 Annual Meeting course and INS proposals is May 15. Courses may be submitted with or without endorsement of the Section. Dr. Barrett requested those interested in submitting courses not wait until last minute to discuss with Drs. Barrett and Drubach if section endorsement is desired; she proposed a May 1st deadline. The section can also team up with another section for an INS opportunity, or could look at submitting a Subspecialty in Focus (SIF) proposal. NRR and Behavioral Neurology did an SIF a couple of years ago. Dr. Barrett reported attendees at the NRR Meet and Eat the night prior informally discussed approaching the Stroke Section to create a proposal.

2015 Highlights in the Field
Members are encouraged to attend this session on Thursday, April 23 from 5:30-6:30pm.

2015 Neurology in Review Plenary
Members are encouraged to attend this session on Friday, April 24 from 4:30-6:00pm. Bruce Dobkin is presenting on Neural Repair.

Presentation
Michael Levy presented a position paper on regenerative cellular therapies for neurologic diseases. This project came out of a meeting last year about using stem cells in neurologic diseases. A team was
assembled who reviewed all trials conducted over the last 20 years in 8 different disease areas. They found there was no clinical trial data available that the AAN should endorse at this point.

Dr. Levy reviewed trials on demyelinating disease for the paper, and discussed the Geron trial using embryonic stem cells. There was a lot of excitement around this trial initially, but it folded due to insufficient funds. The enrolled patients, however, will continue to be followed. He reported that with MS patients, the term “stem cells” has been misused. Physicians can help educate patients on this. The investigators tried to distinguish between immunological stem cells and neural stem cells.

Parkinson’s disease is a great disease model for experimentation. There have been some fairly large trials (100 subjects or so); the investigators believe this area has a lot of promise. Dr. Fisher provided additional information about 10-year follow-up issues. Dr. Levy also reported researchers are close to a therapeutic trial in macular degeneration; this is likely to be the first indication for stem cell treatment, and other diseases will take more time.

Neurostem has done work with stem cells in ALS with direct surgical injection to the spinal cord. They have good Phase II data; out of 15 patients, 7 stabilized. This therapy was considered safe, with no adverse effects. While researchers initially thought new cells would be generated, it looks like the mechanism is more supportive (keeping existing cells). There is talk about moving forward with a larger study.

Dr. Levy summarized there is more interest in stem cell research that in the past, but physicians should urge patients to be cautious. Most studies will only enroll subjects who have never had kind of prior stem cell treatment. Further questions can be directed to Dr. Levy. The section will be informed when the paper is published.

**ACGME (Brain Injury Medicine) and UCNS (Neurorehabilitation) Certification and Fellowship Accreditation**

In an effort to build support for the value of NRR services, the section has worked over the last several years to become a UCNS subspecialty. There is also a brain medicine certification through ACGME (joint with ACGME-ABPMNR and ABPN). There are currently 23 individuals certified by UCNS, while over 300 individuals sat for the Brain Injury Medicine exam. However, only 23 of those were neurologists. The Brain Injury Medicine exam pass rate was 98.2%.

Dr. Mindy Aisen is the NRR Section representative to the UCNS board, and is also chairing the section’s subspecialty recognition activities relative to a taxonomy code. She is a former ASNR president, and provided information on her background so the attendees could better understand why this issue is important to her. She stated that currently, one needs to be a physiatrist or have “other appropriate experience” to write rehab orders. She is concerned that “other experience” is fading away, and that physiatrists don’t understand the underlying neurology. She explained the model used by her institution (Rancho); they are trying to be a model for continuity of care.

Dr. Aisen and her workgroup submitted a written letter to UCNS in March, urging them to not suspend the NRR exam. However, at the UCNS meeting the day prior, Dr. Aisen was informed that the NRR exam has been suspended due to low enrollment. The subspecialty is not currently financially viable for UCNS, but the exam may be reinstituted with at least 10 neurologists paid to take the exam. She said the subspecialty needs to decide how to proceed, either by 1) getting a large number to sit for a UCNS exam, 2) pursuing the Brain Injury Medicine group to add more stroke (and other) requirements so that
it covers the range of neurologic rehabilitation these practitioners are treating, 3) only seek a taxonomy code, or 4) return to seeking recognition through PMNR. Dr. Aisen expressed the need for NRR practitioners to pull together in seeking recognition, both certification at the individual level, and accreditation for fellowships, in addition to a taxonomy code for neurologic rehabilitation. Currently, Burke is the only UCNS approved fellowship. Dr. Aisen said she is willing to put together application from Rancho if there is interest.

**Taxonomy Code Work Group Update**

Dr. Barrett reported that in response to an email from Dr. Pedley (AAN President) to section leaders regarding subspecialty recognition, a work group drafted and submitted a letter requesting AAN assistance in seeking a taxonomy code for NRR. A response has not yet been received. She thanked Dr. Aisen for leading this effort.

Section members interested in assisting with future subspecialty recognition efforts are asked to contact Dr Aisen. Drs. Aisen and Barrett stressed the need for an engaged workgroup to keep these efforts moving forward.

**New/Old Business**

Dr. Barrett updated attendees on the recent Committee on Sections (COS) meeting. The AAN has created two new staff positions dedicated to supporting AAN sections in lieu of the current decentralized staffing model. Members can also expect to hear more in the future about the AAN’s new Axon Registry. The primary function of the registry is not data collection, but to demonstrate the value of neurologists/neurology.

Finally, Dr. Barrett reported the results from a survey conducted with the AAN Insights team. The survey was sent to NRR section members as well as those who indicated NRR as an area interest but who are not section members. About 64 NRR members responded, and expressed interest in receiving/sharing more NRR-specific content to enhance the value of the section. Of those who listed NRR as an interest, fewer than 20 practitioners responded, but it was not clear what would provide more value for them. However, 16 did join section as a result of the survey. Dr. Barrett will share survey results with the group.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52pm.