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THE VOICE OF BRAIN INJURY

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH
MARCH 2014

BRAIN INJURY: ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, ANYONE
Brain injuries do not discriminate

- An injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive and behavior challenges.
- You can't plan for a brain injury, but once it happens, you need to know where to go for help.
- Early, equal and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life.

BIAA Promotion Guide for State Affiliates

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) and our network of state affiliates, including self-advocates, families, and volunteers across the nation, will mark Brain Injury Awareness Month this March. We will continue to use the theme and graphics that were introduced in 2012.

Brain Injury Awareness Month Theme:

Brain Injury: Anytime, Anywhere, Anyone

Brain Injury Awareness Month Supporting Message:

Brain injuries do not discriminate

BIAA has developed materials to support the theme and we encourage you to use them anywhere, and everywhere you can. Please note the graphics do not say "Brain Injury Awareness Month" so they can be used throughout the year. These materials are available to download from BIAA's website:

<http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm>.

On the following pages you will find suggestions for promoting Brain Injury Awareness Month and suggested copy that you can use or adapt as you wish.

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[BIAA Promotion Guide for Brain Injury Awareness Month \(and beyond\)](#)

General Promotion Suggestions for Brain Injury Awareness Month

1. Post an announcement on the home page of your website announcing, “March is Brain Injury Awareness Month.”
2. Post the web graphic of the Brain Injury Awareness Month logo on your website (available for download at <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm>)
3. Post a list of events taking place during March to raise awareness of brain injury, and post a list of suggestions for how people can get involved and spread the word.
4. Use your social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.) to generate excitement and solicit participation and sharing of ideas (suggestions on following pages).
5. Reach out to your local media and community to spread the word about brain injuries during March and throughout the year (suggestions follow).
6. Use state-specific and local statistics and feature local self-advocates, family members and caregivers. BIAA helps by providing the national picture.
7. Develop a specific call to action or ask. Some examples:
 - Go to our website for more information ...
 - Contact your congressperson now and ask for
 - Tell the next person you see that March is Brain Injury Awareness Month and explain why you care
 - Donate today
 - Send us your outreach success story...

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MEDIA AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Media Outreach Ideas

- Before you do anything, see if your state has an affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America to see how you can join in and support their efforts (<http://www.biausa.org/state-affiliates.htm>).
- Connect with reporters and media outlets (broadcast, print, Internet) to let them know March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. Offer them story ideas. Use statistics in this guide to provide a national perspective, but have a few bullet points about your own connection to brain injury and tell them why it matters to you.
- Reach out to community relations contacts at your local media outlets about airing a PSA and promote any local activities/events planned for March.
- Create a packet of materials that you can share, including the BIAA fact sheet and one-page flyer available at <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm>, a list of Brain Injury Awareness Month activities in your area, and a short bio about you and your connection to brain injury (include your contact information).
- When you are reaching out to the media, you may need to educate them about how to report and write about people with brain injury. Brain Injury Awareness Month is a prime opportunity to educate the media about the usage of “people-first” language, which emphasizes the person, not the disability. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual, but one of several aspects of the whole person.
- Offer your state affiliate as a resource for information media may need for stories they plan to do about people with brain injury or issues important to the brain injury community. If your state does not have an active affiliate, refer the media contact to Rob Traister, BIAA’s director of communications, at rtraister@biausa.org or 703-584-8628.

Quotes and Statistics about Brain Injury

Message points

- Just as no two people are exactly alike, no two brain injuries are exactly alike. A brain injury is the often a lifelong disease process, requiring access to a full continuum of medically-necessary treatment and community-based supports furnished by interdisciplinary teams of qualified and specialized clinicians working in accredited programs and appropriate settings.
- “Brain Injury Awareness Month honors the millions of people with brain injury, who, with proper acute care, therapeutic rehabilitation, and adequate long-term supports, are living with the

successes and challenges that each day brings. Our goals are to sustain and bolster brain injury programs, increase access to care, and preserve vital brain injury research.” *Susan H. Connors, President/CEO, Brain Injury Association of America.*

- “Since anyone can sustain a brain injury at any time, it is important for everyone to have access to comprehensive rehabilitation and ongoing disease management. Doing so eases medical complications, permanent disability, family dysfunction, job loss, homelessness, impoverishment, medical indigence, suicide, and involvement with the criminal or juvenile justice system. Access to early, comprehensive treatment for brain injury also alleviates the burden of long term care that is transferred to tax payers at the federal, state and local levels.” *Dr. Brent Masel, National Medical Director, Brain Injury Association of America*

Incidence of brain injury

- 2.4 million people sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Injury Prevention, the leading causes of TBI are:
 - Falls (35.2%)
 - Motor vehicle-traffic crashes (17.3%)
 - Struck by/against events (16.5%)
 - Assaults (10%)
- Brain injury can result in a range of outcomes (according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):
 - 52,000 die
 - 275,000 are hospitalized
 - 1,365,000 are treated and released from an emergency department.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among children ages 0 to 14 years, TBI results in an estimated
 - 2,685 deaths
 - 37,000 hospitalizations
 - 435,000 emergency department visits
- The number of people with TBI who are not seen in an emergency department or who receive no care is unknown.
- TBI is a contributing factor to a third (30.5%) of all injury-related deaths in the United States.
- About 75% of TBIs that occur each year are concussions or other forms of mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI).

Cost of brain injury care

- Average hospital-based acute rehab is about \$8,000 per day
- Range for post-acute residential is about \$850 to \$2,500 per day
- Day treatment programs (e.g., four hours of therapy) are about \$600 to \$1,000 with no room/board
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, direct medical costs and indirect costs of TBI in the U.S., such as lost productivity, totaled an estimated \$76.5 billion.

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Sample Website Blurb

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month! A brain injury can happen anytime, anywhere, to anyone. Brain injuries do not discriminate. Did you know that 2.4 million people sustain brain injuries in the U.S. each year? An injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive, and behavioral challenges. Early, equal, and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life. This is our goal. Please click here [INCLUDE LINK to either <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm> or your state BIA affiliate] for more information.

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Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: NAME

DATE

Phone Number(s); email

MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH
BRAIN INJURY: ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, ANYONE
Brain Injuries do Not Discriminate

(City/Town, Date) – March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. A brain injury can happen anytime, anywhere, to anyone. Brain injuries do not discriminate. Did you know that 2.4 million people sustain brain injuries in the U.S. each year? An injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive, and behavioral challenges. Early, equal, and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life.

[State Name] joins a nationwide network of state brain injury organizations affiliated with the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), including self-advocates, families and volunteers across the nation to mark Brain Injury Awareness Month this March. “Brain Injury Awareness Month honors the millions of people with brain injury, who with proper acute care, therapeutic rehabilitation and adequate long-term supports, are living with the successes and challenges that each day brings,” said Susan H. Connors, president/CEO of the Brain Injury Association of America. “Our goals are to continue to sustain and bolster brain injury programs, increase access to care and preserve vital brain injury research.”

“Since anyone can sustain a brain injury at any time, it is important for everyone to have access to comprehensive rehabilitation and ongoing disease management,” said Dr. Brent Masel, national medical director for the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA). “Doing so eases medical complications, permanent disability, family dysfunction, job loss, homelessness, impoverishment, medical indigence, suicide and involvement with the criminal or juvenile justice system. Access to early, comprehensive treatment for brain injury also alleviates the burden of long term care that is transferred to tax payers at the federal, state and local levels.”

[SELF ADVOCATE QUOTE:]

(include a quote from a self advocate or family member about their story, highlighting the importance of adequate care and rehab)

Our mission is to be the voice of brain injury. Through advocacy, education and research, we bring help, hope and healing to millions of individuals living with brain injury, their families and the professionals who serve them.

[BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE]

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BIAA Promotion Guide for Brain Injury Awareness Month (and beyond)

Sample Letter to the Editor

DATE

To [*the Editor*]:

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. A brain injury can happen anytime, anywhere, to anyone. Brain injuries do not discriminate, and 2.4 million people sustain brain injuries each year in the U.S. An injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive, and behavior challenges. Early, equal, and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life.

We are proud to join with advocates across the country to recognize March as Brain Injury Awareness Month to honor the millions of people with brain injury, who with proper acute care, therapeutic rehabilitation and adequate long-term supports, are living with the successes and challenges that each day brings. Our goals this year are to continue to sustain and bolster brain injury programs, increase access to care and preserve vital brain injury research.

[Insert a message from you that explains your connection to brain injury and why it is important to raise awareness]

Join us in raising awareness of brain injury, which can happen anytime, anywhere and to anyone, through the following: volunteer, donate, speak out to elected officials on issues affecting people with brain injuries, and more. Visit <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm> to learn what else you can do to help the Brain Injury Association of America continue to raise awareness of the impact of brain injury.

[NAME

EMAIL, PHONE, ADDRESS]

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Spread the Word in your Community

- Contact producers of local public affairs radio and television programs, inviting them to devote a program to brain injuries.
- Contact civic clubs such as Lions, Kiwanis, Civitan, Rotary International, Jaycees, or Junior League and offer to be a speaker for their March meetings. Self-advocates are some of the most effective communicators of BIAA's mission and are sure to inspire their members.
- Offer your local newspapers some creative stories about people living with brain injury who are contributing to the community in ways that people may not realize. Be sure to include quotes and photos (or offer to have photos taken) of the subjects of the stories to make them more compelling.
- Submit an op-ed column or letter to the editor explaining Brain Injury Awareness Month and invite the community to learn more about BIAA.
- Send a script for a radio PSA to your local stations asking them to record and air it during March. Be sure to include a cover letter with information about brain injury and BIAA and why your community should be more aware about brain injuries.
- Devote a section of your website or put daily posts on your Facebook and Twitter pages giving the community suggestions for what they can do to raise awareness. Consider hosting a daily or weekly guest blog.
- Contact your local Business Roundtable, Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade – explaining that March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, which may provide the perfect impetus to encourage businesses to learn more about the opportunities to hire individuals with brain injury.
- Sign up for BIAA's Policy Corner (biausa.org/policycorner) and take action when prompted.
- Post testimonials on YouTube.

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Sample Blog Post:

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month
What are you going to do to spread the word?

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. A brain injury can happen anytime, anywhere to anyone – brain injuries do not discriminate. Did you know that 2.4 million people sustain a brain injury each year? An injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive, and behavioral challenges, and early, equal, and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life.

We honor the millions of people with brain injury, who with proper acute care, therapeutic rehabilitation and adequate long-term supports, are living with the successes and challenges that each day brings. Our goals this year are to sustain and bolster brain injury programs, increase access to care and preserve vital brain injury research.

BIAA helps people with brain injury and their families by providing information, resources and support and by advocating for life-saving research and treatment. But, we can accomplish more together with a strong collective voice. So, we invite you to join us during March to raise awareness for brain injury and the challenges ahead. Throughout the month you'll find posts on Twitter and Facebook [[LINK TO BIAA's](#) or your affiliate's social media pages] with some simple suggestions as to what you can do to help raise awareness. We welcome your comments now and always about why protecting and promoting the rights of people with brain injury is important to you.

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Sample Facebook Posts (Suggested 2 per week during March):

- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Speak up.
- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Volunteer.
- Support March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Speak out. Let your local lawmakers know that you support policies that help people with brain injuries.
- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Tell someone. Tell the next person you see that March is Brain Injury Awareness Month and tell them why you care.
- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper asking them to recognize Brain Injury Awareness Month and tell them why it is important to you.
- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Take awareness viral. Post this as your status: March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. More than 2.4 million Americans sustain a brain injury every year. Find out more and get involved at www.biausa.org [OR YOUR AFFILIATE'S WEBSITE] today.

Sample Twitter Posts:

- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. What can you do to raise awareness? Find out more at www.biausa.org [or YOUR AFFILIATE'S WEBSITE].
- March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. No better time to get informed and get involved. www.biausa.org [or YOUR AFFILIATE'S WEBSITE]
- 2.4 million Americans sustain a brain injury each year. It could be you or someone you love. March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. Spread the word.
- Don't forget...March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. How aware are you? Get information about brain injuries at www.biausa.org [or YOUR AFFILIATE'S WEBSITE].
- Speak up. Speak out. Spread the word. March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. Please RT.

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Sample Newsletter Article

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. A brain injury can happen anytime, anywhere to anyone – brain injuries do not discriminate. Did you know that 2.4 million people will sustain a brain injury each year? An injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive and behavior challenges and early, equal and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life. We encourage all of our readers to take action and spread the word about brain. Here are a few things you can do:

Get involved. Contact [*your affiliate's contact information here*] to volunteer or donate. You can see the full list of ways you can become involved here [*provide link to volunteer opportunities.*]

Speak out. Since many people with brain injuries rely on publicly funded services to fully participate in their communities, policy makers need to know you are concerned about continuing those services in the face of budget cuts. Contact your legislator today and let them know you expect them to enact public policy to assist people with brain injury.

Speak up. Talk to your employer or the businesses you frequent about their practices for recruiting and hiring people with brain injury. Many employers don't realize just how much an employee with brain injury can contribute to the workplace. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released a report for the end of 2010 showing the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is at 14.3 percent, compared with 8.9 percent for the general population.

Spread the word. Learn about issues important to the brain injury community then tell the world what you found out. Post positive thoughts about the brain injury movement on your Facebook page or Twitter account. Follow BIAA [*or your affiliate's name here*] on Facebook and Twitter and express yourself. Or send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining to your community why they should care about brain injuries.

Join us during March to help raise awareness. Find out more about brain injuries and what you can do at www.biausa.org [*or your affiliate website*] today.

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Proclamations and Resolutions

Proclamations and/or resolutions are an excellent way to promote brain injury awareness during the month of March. Ask your mayor, a state representative and/or senator, and/or the governor of your state to designate or proclaim March 2014 as Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Mayoral Proclamation

Mayors around the country often offer proclamations and arrange special events or ceremonies to promote March Brain Injury Awareness Month at the community level. To arrange for your City's mayor to make an Awareness Month proclamation, you should contact the mayor's office as soon as possible to find out who the staff person is in charge of proclamations, and what the process is for obtaining one. Explain that you have a template that could be used, fact sheets and other materials available, and how the mayor can make a difference in promoting awareness regarding the causes and consequences of brain injury in the community – which can happen to anyone, at anytime, and anywhere.

Should the mayor's office agree to the proclamation, ask if the proclamation will be announced via the mayor's press office, or during a regular news conference or during a ceremony. Should the mayor agree to a proclamation ceremony, then ask about location, number of people who can participate, and how the media will be notified. After the details are arranged, send the mayor a follow-up email or letter that confirms the event. Offer to provide his/her staff with a sample press release and/or informational packet on brain injury.

Media Relations

If you will be in charge of media relations, distribute an advisory to your local media one week before the proclamation is to be made in coordination with the mayor's office. Use the promotional materials in this guide. Make sure you greet the media representatives who attend and write down their names and publications for follow-up purposes. Also, plan to take pictures, if possible, for distribution to print media and to post on your website. Be sure to identify all persons in the photos.

Follow Up

After the proclamation is read, you should follow up with thank you letters to the mayor and other participants, as well as thank you emails to media representatives who came to the event or developed a story.

SAMPLE MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

[City and County of _____]

WHEREAS, 2.4 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) each year; and

WHEREAS, a traumatic brain injury is a contributing factor to a third of all injury-related deaths in the United States; and

WHEREAS, these injuries are largely the result of motor vehicle crashes, falls, assaults, sporting- related injuries or occupational injuries; and

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury is the signature injury of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, presenting new challenges for members of the military and their families; and

WHEREAS, an injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive and behavior challenges; and

WHEREAS, early, equal and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life and will enable individuals to return to home, school, work and community; and

WHEREAS, family members, friends and members of this community can play a central role in enhancing the lives of our citizens with traumatic brain injury; and

WHEREAS, the Brain Injury Association of _____ offers education and support to families and individuals with traumatic brain injury with community integration and to live as independently as possible; and

WHEREAS, March has been designated as Brain Injury Awareness Month to promote public awareness on the extent, causes, consequences, treatment and prevention of traumatic brain injury; and now, therefore,

I, _____, Mayor of the City of _____, do hereby proclaim March 2014 as

Brain Injury Awareness Month

and call upon all citizens to observe the month by offering special recognition to the Brain Injury Association of _____ for its invaluable contributions to assist families and individuals with traumatic brain injury; and, I encourage the citizens of _____ to seek information on traumatic brain injury.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have here unto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of the City of ___ on this ___ day of ___.

House/Senate Resolution

A state representative may offer a House of Representatives resolution or a state senator may offer a Senate resolution, which, depending on the rules, requires the introduction of the resolution in the respective body, usually a committee hearing and passage on the floor. In some states, this may be called a courtesy resolution. A legislator may also introduce a concurrent resolution, meaning one resolution is adopted by both houses. Again, either a state representative or a state senator may introduce the concurrent resolution to start the process. To obtain a resolution you may ask your state representative and/or senator to introduce one and offer to provide the text for such resolution. If you are planning an advocacy day, you may request the resolution be adopted while advocates are at the State Capitol. This would present an opportune time to meet with the resolution sponsor(s) and have pictures taken. You may offer to issue a press release featuring the sponsor and the importance of the resolution.

Follow Up

After the resolution is adopted, you should follow up with thank you letters to the sponsor(s) and other participants, as well as thank you emails to media representatives who came to the event or developed a story, should that take place. You may wish to feature the resolution and sponsor(s) in your newsletter, website and/or local newspaper.

SAMPLE HOUSE/SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, 2.4 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) each year; and

WHEREAS, a traumatic brain injury is a contributing factor to a third of all injury-related deaths in the United States; and

WHEREAS, each year, in the State of _____, [insert #] citizens are hospitalized with a traumatic brain injury;

WHEREAS, these injuries are largely the result of motor vehicle crashes, falls, assaults, sporting- related injuries or occupational injuries; and

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury is the signature injury of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, presenting new challenges for members of the military and their families; and

WHEREAS, an injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive and behavior challenges; and

WHEREAS, early, equal and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life, and will enable individuals to return to home, school, work and community; and

WHEREAS, the Brain Injury Association of _____ offers education and support to families and individuals with traumatic brain injury with community integration and to live as independently as possible; and

WHEREAS, March has been designated as Brain Injury Awareness Month to promote public awareness on the extent, causes, consequences, treatment and prevention of traumatic brain injury.

NOW THEREFORE BE RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives designate the month of March as

Brain Injury Awareness Month

and applaud the Brain Injury Association of _____ for its invaluable contributions for educating the citizens of our great State on matters pertaining to traumatic brain injury prevention, treatment, resources, supports and assistance.

Governor's Proclamation

Governors issue proclamations in recognition of special events and occasions. In some states, instructions for requesting a proclamation may be obtained from the office of the governor's website or you may call and request to speak to the staffer responsible for arranging proclamations. A governor may have designated days of the month for proclamation signings and certain requirements in terms of the number of individuals who may attend and if anyone can speak. It also may be acceptable for the association to present a T-shirt, poster or another item pertaining to brain injury to the governor. These proclamation signings may be scheduled well in advance, so it is wise to seek a proclamation as soon as possible in order to have one issued by March. A sample proclamation is generally useful, as well as other fact sheets and materials, to assist staff in drafting a proclamation.

Follow Up

After the proclamation is read, you should follow up with thank you letters to the governor and other participants, as well as thank you emails to media representatives who came to the event or developed a story. You may feature the proclamation signing in your newsletter, website and/or local newspaper.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

[State of _____]

WHEREAS, 2.4 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) each year; and

WHEREAS, a traumatic brain injury is a contributing factor to a third of all injury-related deaths in the United States; and

WHEREAS, each year, in the State of _____, [insert #] citizens are hospitalized with a traumatic brain injury;

WHEREAS, these injuries are largely the result of motor vehicle crashes, falls, assaults, sporting-related injuries or occupational injuries; and

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury is the signature injury of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, presenting new challenges for members of the military and their families; and

WHEREAS, an injury that happens in an instant can bring a lifetime of physical, cognitive and behavior challenges; and

WHEREAS, early, equal and adequate access to care will greatly increase overall quality of life, and will enable individuals to return to home, school, work and community; and

WHEREAS, the Brain Injury Association of America offers education and support to families and individuals with traumatic brain injury with community integration and to live as independently as possible; and

WHEREAS, March has been designated as Brain Injury Awareness month to promote public awareness on the extent, causes, consequences, treatment and prevention of traumatic brain injury.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Governor of the State of _____ hereby proclaim the month of March 2014 as

Brain Injury Awareness Month

and applaud the Brain Injury Association of _____ for its invaluable contributions for educating the citizens of our great State on matters pertaining to traumatic brain injury prevention, treatment, resources, supports and assistance.