



The Voice of Brain Injury
Providing Help, Hope and Healing to over
3 Million Americans Living with Brain Injury

Ensure Returning Service Members Receive Access to Effective TBI Treatments

About Brain Injury

A traumatic brain injury is an alteration in brain function, or other evidence of brain pathology, caused by an external force. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that 1.7 million people in the U.S. sustain traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) annually and at least 3.17 million children and adults live with a permanent disability as a result of a TBI. The cost to society for medical care and lost wages associated with TBI is \$60 billion annually.

Individuals with TBI may experience memory loss; concentration or attention problems; slowed learning; and difficulty with planning, reasoning or judgment. Emotional and behavioral consequences include depression, anxiety, impulsivity, aggression and thoughts of suicide.

Physical challenges of TBI may include fatigue, headaches, problems with balance or motor skills, sensory losses and seizures. TBI can lead to respiratory, circulatory, digestive and neurological diseases, including epilepsy, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

Poor outcomes after TBI result from shortened length of stays in both inpatient and outpatient medical treatment settings. Payers point to a lack of sufficient evidence-based research as a primary reason for coverage denial of medically-necessary treatment. This occurs particularly when behavioral health services and cognitive rehabilitation are needed.

About BIAA

Founded in 1980, the mission of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) is to provide help, hope and healing to the millions of Americans who sustain brain injuries each year. BIAA is dedicated to increasing access to quality health care and raising awareness and understanding of brain injury through advocacy, education and research. Together with its nationwide network of chartered state affiliates, as well as hundreds of local chapters and support groups across the country, BIAA is the Voice of Brain Injury for individuals, their families and the professionals who serve them.

Take Action Now!

The estimated 360,000 service members who have sustained a TBI in Iraq and Afghanistan must have access to a full continuum of care, including:

- **Cognitive Rehabilitation:** This critical therapy, which has been proven effective in numerous research studies, is available to active duty military but is not accessible to medical retirees under TRICARE, thereby limiting opportunities for productive living.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation:** Many service members and veterans with TBI seek employment, but the Veterans Administration views employment as a goal of rehabilitation rather than a means of rehabilitation, thereby declaring many medical retirees ineligible for vocational rehabilitation that leads to volunteer positions or community service.
- **Home and Community Based Treatment:** While the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have vastly improved the quality and speed of care for service members and veterans with TBI, access to local and specialized treatment remains limited. Decision-makers within each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) should be encouraged to exercise their authority to contract with private providers throughout their regions.

Service members who have sustained brain injuries while serving their country deserve the right treatment, right now!

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