

May 17, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
SD 131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
SD 156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

The undersigned organizations respectfully request your support for \$22 million for FY 2012 to fund programs authorized by the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act as amended in 2008 in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We also request an increase for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) TBI Model Systems administered by the Department of Education.

Known as the “silent epidemic,” TBI continues to be the signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and incidence is increasing here at home among our nation’s civilian population. From the battlefield to the football field, TBI remains a leading cause of death and disability in both adults and youth. Primary funding to address this growing population is provided through these programs.

Therefore, we request funding for TBI Act programs in the following amounts:

- **\$10 million** for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention TBI Registries and Surveillance, Brain Injury Acute Care Guidelines, Prevention and National Public Education/Awareness
- **\$8 million** for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal TBI State Grant Program
- **\$4 million** for the HRSA Federal TBI Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Systems Grant Program

Congress should also increase funding by **\$1.5 million** in FY2012 for NIDRR’s TBI Model Systems of Care program, in order to add one new Collaborative Research Project. In addition, given the national importance of this research program, the TBI Model Systems of Care should receive “line-item” status within the broader NIDRR budget.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Injury Center estimates that 1.7 million TBIs occur each year and 3.4 million Americans live with a life long disability as a result of TBI. CDC plays a leading role in standardizing evidence based guidelines for the management of TBI, linking civilian and military populations with TBI services, and educating primary care

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physicians, of which \$3 million dollars of this request would go to fund CDC's work in those areas.

The TBI Act authorizes the HHS, Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) to award grants to (1) States, American Indian Consortia and territories to improve access to service delivery and to (2) state Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems to expand advocacy services to include individuals with traumatic brain injury. For the past fourteen years the HRSA Federal TBI State Grant Program has supported State efforts to address the needs of persons with brain injury and their families and to expand and improve services to underserved and unserved populations including children and youth; veterans and returning troops; and individuals with co-occurring conditions.

In FY 2009, HRSA reduced the number of State grant awards to increase each monetary award to help States better carry out the goals of their grants. However, less than half of the States now have grants, and others that had participated in the program have now been forced to close down their operations, leaving many unable to access brain injury care.

The HRSA TBI P&A Program currently provides funding to all state P&A systems for purposes of protecting the legal and human rights of individuals with TBI. While each state P&A receives a grant, the award amounts are minimal. A \$4 million appropriation would increase the grant awards to ensure that each P&A can move towards providing a significant PATBI program with appropriate staff time and expertise.

Funding for the TBI Model Systems in the Department of Education is urgently needed to ensure that the nation's valuable TBI research capacity is not diminished, and to maintain and build upon the 16 TBI Model Systems research centers around the country. The TBI Model Systems are the only source of non-proprietary longitudinal data on what happens to people with brain injury. They are a key source of evidence-based medicine, and serve as a "proving ground" for future researchers.

We ask that you consider favorably these requests for the CDC, the HRSA Federal TBI Program, and NIDRR TBI Model Systems Program to further data collection, increase public awareness, improve medical care, assist states in coordinating systems, protect the rights of persons with TBI, and bolster vital research.

Sincerely,

APSE
American Dance Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association
American Trauma Society
Autism National Committee
Blinded Veterans Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Family Voices
Friends of the TBI Model Systems
Learning Disabilities Association of America
National Association of County Behavioral and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
Safe States Alliance
School Social Work Association of America
The Advocacy Institute
United Spinal Association
Brain Injury Association of Connecticut
Brain Injury Association of Hawaii
Brain Injury Association of Illinois
Brain Injury Association of Iowa
Brain Injury Association of Louisiana
Brain Injury Association of Michigan
Brain Injury Association of Minnesota
Brain Injury Association of Mississippi
Brain Injury Association of Missouri
Brain Injury Association of Nebraska
Brain Injury Association of New Jersey
Brain Injury Association of New York State
Brain Injury Association of North Carolina
Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania
Brain Injury Association of Rhode Island
Brain Injury Association of Tennessee
Brain Injury Association of Texas
Brain Injury Association of Utah
Brain Injury Association of Vermont
Brain Injury Association of Virginia
Brain Injury Association of Washington
Brain Injury Association of Washington, D.C.
Brain Injury Association of Wisconsin