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A blow or jolt to the head can result in a traumatic brain Injury (TBI), which can disrupt the function of the brain.⁵

Each year in the United States, an estimated 1.4 million people sustain a TBI,⁶ and 80,000 to 90,000 people experience the onset of long-term disability associated with a TBI.⁶

Direct medical costs and indirect costs (such as lost productivity) of TBI totaled an estimated \$56.3 billion in the United States in 1995.⁷

Soldiers with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Problem:

Brain injuries occur during combat. From previous wars it has been estimated that approximately 20% of all combat-related military casualties have sustained a brain injury.¹

The rate of combat-related brain injuries in soldiers returning from current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan appears to be higher than in previous wars. Nearly 30% of all combat-related injuries seen at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from 2003 to 2005 included a brain injury.²

Blast injuries can result in a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Soldiers are at risk for blast injuries from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades and land mines. It has been estimated that more than 50% of all combat injuries are blast injuries occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan.³

From 2003 to 2005, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center at Walter Reed screened 862 injured soldiers who had returned from Iraq or Afghanistan and were deemed as being at risk for brain injury.⁴

51% of these high-risk soldiers were found to have a brain injury.²

A brain injury can last a lifetime.

Needs:

- * Increase support for the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC).
- * Ensure continued TBI screening for all soldiers returning from combat.
- * Increase availability and access to on-going community based services.
- * Increase Case Management services to survivors of TBI.
- * Expand efforts to educate the public about TBI.

How can Congress help support our soldiers?

- * Provide an additional **\$7 million** for DVHIP in the Department of Defense (DOD) appropriations bill for FY 2007.

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center facts:

- * Established in 1992 as the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program (DVHIP) the organization is now known as the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC).
- * The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center's mission is to serve active duty military, their dependents and veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) through patient care, innovative clinical research initiatives, and educational programs.

DVHIP is:

- * A multi-site patient care, clinical research and education center;
- * A collaboration of the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system and a civilian partner;
- * Funded through the Department of Defense.

DVBIC has its headquarters at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC and provides services through seven military (including Walter Reed) and VA sites and one civilian treatment site.

For more information about DVBIC visit their website at www.dvbic.org or call 800-870-9244.

For more information about brain injury rehabilitation, treatment, community and support services, visit the Brain Injury Association of America's website at www.biausa.org or call 1-800-444-6443.

Brain Injury Association of America
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¹ ARNEWS (Army News Service), Spc. Chuck Wagner, Nov. 24, 2003, "Brain Injuries High Among Iraq Casualties"

² Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

³ DVBIC website on blast injury, <http://www.dvbic.org/blastinjury.html>, citing Coupland & Meddings, 1999.

⁴ DVBIC website on blast injury, <http://www.dvbic.org/blastinjury.html>.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control, Injury Prevention, Traumatic Brain Injury - Fact Sheet, 6/1/2004.

⁶ Thurman D, Alverson C, Dunn K, Guerrero J, Sniezek J. Traumatic brain injury in the United States: a public health perspective. *J Head Trauma Rehabil* 1999;14(6):602-15.

⁷ Thurman D. The epidemiology and economics of head trauma. In: Miller L, Hayes R, editors. *Head Trauma: Basic, Preclinical, and Clinical Directions*. New York (NY): Wiley and Sons; 2001.