



Feb/Mar 2024 Vol 2



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## MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

February was filled with planning, organizing and preparing the finishing touches for the March 2, 2024 Brain Injury Association of Hawaii Educational and Resource Conference. The "Put Your Best Brain Forward" conference was a free event held at the Ala Moana Hotel Hibiscus Conference Room. Approximately 150 attendees were at the first Conference held by BIHi (fka BIAH) in ten years. The seven speakers and 10 vendors were well received with registrants eagerly looking forward to next year's conference.

This Newsletter contains information concerning reauthorization and funding the federal TBI Act. It also introduces BIHi's two new directors to its board. They are Paige Onishi and Rose Evelyn Friedheim, Ph.D. Sienna Byrne, a recent Princeton graduate who lives on the Big Island shares her TBI story.

This issue also includes regular features concerning support group, webinar and podcast meeting dates and times, the "I See You, I Hear You" free therapy sessions for survivors and BIHi members, and our MAHALO to all of you donors. BIHi is a fully volunteer, non-profit organization, entirely funded by donors who provide financial and in-kind donations of time and services. public regarding brain injury safety and treatments.

Thank you and be well,

Billie "BJ" Wade



**SIENNA BYRNE**

**BEAUTY PAGEANT  
CONTESTANT IS TBI  
SURVIVOR**

Sienna Byrne is a Big Island BRAIN INJURY WARRIOR. She lives in Kamuela and is a recent graduate of Princeton University. On March 20th 2023, Sienna was practicing for the women's Princeton rowing team. Her rowboat was struck by a speeding motorboat which crossed over multiple buoys crashing into Sienna's boat head on. Sienna sustained multiple injuries including a traumatic brain injury. She was hospitalized and experienced extensive treatments and therapy.

According to Rowsafeusa.org, it is unknown how many accidents occur in the United states each year from rowing, but it is known they happen from middle schoolers to masters and from novices to Olympians. Rowing accidents for minor injuries with little or no damage are common. Accidents resulting in significant injuries are fewer; and collisions with motorboats are beyond the control of rowers.

Despite her ordeal, Sienna managed to graduate from Princeton University in December 2023 and has entered the 2024 Miss Hawaii USA contest. Because of her experience, Sienna will address the issue of traumatic brain injuries and the call for more public awareness as part of her 2024 Miss Hawaii USA platform.

BIHi congratulates Sienna for her Warrior outlook and supports her in making TBI awareness part of her Miss Hawaii USA platform.

# LEGISLATION NEEDED

According to the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA is an affiliate), a traumatic brain injury is viewed by the public and by health care systems as an acute one-time event. Extensive research has shown that it can be chronic, causing permanent brain injury related disabilities. Fully funding the TBI ACT AND reauthorizing TBI as a chronic disability is essential

## REAUTHORIZE AND FULLY FUND THE TBI ACT



### IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE TBI ACT

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) administers the TBI Act funding. It is used for the TBI State Partnership Grant Program, which helps states increase access to services and supports for individuals with TBI throughout their lifespan. It is also used for the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) TBI Grant Program, which helps states provide advocacy services for people with brain injury. Currently 31 states receive TBI State grants, and they are severely underfunded, as are all the P&A grants.

BIAA urges Congress to:

- Expand the eligibility criteria for programs to include hypoxic and other acquired brain injuries;
- Ease the state match requirement from 50% to 25%;
- Allow P&A access into VA facilities and federal prisons;
- Require the Health and Human Services Secretary to examine the evidence base of brain injury as a chronic condition.
- Increase funding for the TBI Act to \$25 million, and appropriate
  - \$19 million to the State Grant Program so all states can participate (an increase of \$11 million), and
  - \$6 million to the P&A Grant Program (an increase of \$3.5 million).

### FULLY FUND THE CDC TBI PROGRAM

The TBI Act authorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to collect data and conduct public education and research. The TBI Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 further authorized the establishment of a National Concussion Surveillance System; a pilot indicated much higher levels of brain injury than have been reported from other large, national datasets. Their work needs to be fully funded to truly grasp the scope of the issue and continue its vitally important work in this area.

BIAA urges Congress to reauthorize \$11.75 million in CDC TBI Programs funding, and appropriate:

- \$6.72 million for the TBI program within the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), and
- \$5 million for the National Concussion Surveillance System.



### BRAIN INJURY IS A CHRONIC CONDITION

Every year, at least 2.8 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury. While most of them fall into the "mild" category, they can cause temporary and permanent neurological impairment. There are more than 5 million people living with a permanent brain injury-related disability – one in 60 Americans.

Brain injury is viewed by healthcare systems and the public as a one-time event, rather than the beginning of what can be persistent medical, physical cognitive and behavioral effects. The idea that brain injury can permanently change a person – their capabilities, their personality, their ability to work and socialize as they once did – is not something most people can understand.

Extensive research has demonstrated brain injury is not just an acute injury, but a chronic condition that affects far more than the brain; it may cause associated conditions that can increase health care costs and complicate recovery. The chronic, long-term effects of brain injury are wide-ranging, and can include fatigue, sensitivity to noise and light, memory loss, mobility issues, chronic migraines, trouble with focus and executive functioning, depression, and anxiety.

Having brain injury recognized as a chronic condition would mean more services and supports across the lifespan; it would open new avenues to treatment and research; and it would go a long way toward educating the public and correcting misconceptions about a condition that impacts millions of Americans.

**Sign up for BIAA's free e-newsletter, Policy Corner!**  
[www.biausa.org/get-involved](http://www.biausa.org/get-involved)

**For information, contact:**

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## **GETTING YOUR BRAIN "BOSS" BACK ON THE JOB: STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU GET ORGANIZED AND ASSIST YOUR BRAIN WITH CONTINUED HEALING**

**MEGAN DOOLEY** is the guest speaker at the Brain Injury Oahu Support Group (BIOSG) meeting on Saturday, March 30, 2024. Megan is a speech-language pathologist and owner of a new speech therapy private practice called Restore Hawai'i Speech Therapy. Megan has 15 years of experience across the continuum of care (hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation, skilled nursing facilities, home health, and outpatient) and 6 years of having the great joy of serving the community on O'ahu. Helping people on the journey back to communicating and connecting with the ones they love, regaining independence and getting back to the life they love are some of her greatest passions!

### **SPEECH THERAPY FOR THE BRAIN INJURED**

One of the goals of TBI rehabilitation is speech therapy. There are various strategies for individuals with a TBI depending on the type of injury. The speech therapist can address the following:

**Dysarthria** - The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) names Dysarthria as a brain injury that impairs the nerves in the brain that controls muscles that damage speech. It results in mumbling, slurred words, or speech that sounds slow, weak, or stifled. Rehabilitation involves exercises for lip and tongue coordination and breath work.

**Aphasia** - Exercises to slow the pace of speech and to clearly enunciate words is the objective.

**Memory** - The introduction of memory is used to support language building skills. Memory aids, logs, and calendars are used to document, schedule and improve memory.

**Social Language Skills** - Some with a TBI may need to learn how to read nonverbal signs, body language and facial expressions. They may also need to learn how to react in a typical conversation. A therapist can teach how to compensate with facial expressions, eye contact and gestures that help with communication.

**Communication Skills** - As part of their post-acute brain injury rehabilitation, individuals with brain injuries may find it difficult to process new information, so they will also need to acquire skills for planning and composing their thoughts.



**"Put Your Best Brain Forward"**  
**Pictures from the March 2, 2024 Resource & Education Conference**



# **BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS, AND RELATED PRESENTATIONS COURSES & PRESENTATIONS**

## **(In Person and Virtual)**

Support group title: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii **Big Island Mixed Group Support Group**

Format: In-person at various locations on Hawaii island

Dates: **Third Thursday of every month**

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm HST

Location: Varies

Additional information: Comprised of adults with various disabilities, the group meets for fellowship and peer support. For more information, please contact Karin Riedel at 808-333-2408.

Support group title: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii **Kauai Laulima Peer Support Group**

Format: In-person on Kauai

**Dates: Last Thursday of the month** HST

Additional information: For times, location, and other information, contact Holly Pickens-Torres at 808-652-6092

Support group title: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii **Molokai Keiki Support Group**

Format: In-person on Molokai

**Dates: Every third Wednesday of the month**

**Time: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm HST**

Location: Home Pumehana, Conference Room #1

Additional information: Contact Luana Angliam at 808-866-3792.

Support group title: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii **Molokai Youth Support Group**

Format: In-person on Molokai

**Dates: Every fourth Friday of the month**

**Time: 10:30 am – 11:30 am HST**

Location: Home Pumehana, Conference Room #1

Additional information: Contact Luana Angliam at 808-866-3792.

Support group title: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii **Molokai Non-Ambulatory Support Group**

Format: In-person on Molokai

**Dates: Every second Friday of the month**

**Time: 10:30 am – 11:30 am HST**

Location: Home Pumehana, Conference Room #1

Additional information: Consumers have the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding issues they are facing within their community and how they will move forward to take action as a group. For more information, please contact Luana Angliam at 808-866-3792.

Support group title: **Brain Injury Oahu Support Group (BIOSG)**

Format: In-person on Oahu

**Dates: The last Saturday of each month: March 30, 2024**

**Times: 10:00 am – 12:00 noon HST**

Guest Presentation by Megan Dooley is a speech-language pathologist and owner of a new speech therapy private practice called Restore Hawai'i Speech Therapy. Her topic will be, "Getting Your Brain "Boss" Back on the Job: Strategies to Help You Get Organized and Assist Your Brain with Continued Healing"

Location: Catholic Charities Clarence TC Ching Campus, 1822 Keeaumoku Street, Room 3, Honolulu, HI

Additional information: Call or text BJ Wade at 808-221-8330.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrainInjuryAssociationOfHawaii/>

Email: [braininjuryofhawaii@gmail.com](mailto:braininjuryofhawaii@gmail.com)

Support group title: **Creative Arts Program**

Format: In-person on Oahu

Cost: \$15 per session

**Days: Available Tuesdays and Thursdays**

**Time: 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

Location: REHAB Hospital of the Pacific, 227 North Kuakini Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

Additional information: For current and former REHAB inpatients and outpatients. Registration is required. Contact Melissa Mullen, Patient Experiences Manager, by email at [art@rehabhospital.org](mailto:art@rehabhospital.org) or by phone at 808-566-3741

Website: <https://www.rehabhospital.org/programs/creative-arts-program>

Support group title: **C.A.N. (CRUSH ABLEISM NOW) LUNCH CLUB** Format: In-person on Oahu

Dates: **TBA** - Times: **TBA**

Location: University of Hawaii at Manoa campus

Additional information: Monthly social lunch meeting for the disabled, chronically ill and neurodivergent University of Hawaii community, and anyone who wants to learn more about disability solidarity. Bring your own lunch. Light pupus provided. Contact Dr. Daniela Bond-Smith at [db48@hawaii.edu](mailto:db48@hawaii.edu) or call 808-203-7191. Optional registration: <https://go.hawaii.edu/gYk>

Support group title: **HILO STROKE SUPPORT GROUP** Format: Virtual

Dates: **Second Tuesday of each month** Time: 4:00 – 5:00 pm HST

To join the group:

[https://www.google.com/url?q=https://ehihalawai.zoom.us/j/91814580807?pwd=%3DSzRIZVJZTHFzVzFzSINwQnlzUHg2QT09&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1653250928593396&usg=AOvVaw129kpUEQcZJJKEfK-Cu\\_bt](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://ehihalawai.zoom.us/j/91814580807?pwd=%3DSzRIZVJZTHFzVzFzSINwQnlzUHg2QT09&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1653250928593396&usg=AOvVaw129kpUEQcZJJKEfK-Cu_bt)

Support group title: **Hui Malama Po’o Support Group**

Format: In-person in Honolulu, HI

Dates: **Third Saturday of each month**

Times: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm HST

Location: REHAB Hospital of the Pacific, 226 N. Kuakini Street, Honolulu, HI 96817, Wo 4

Additional information: The Hui Malama Po’o support group objectives are to use crafting as cognitive therapy, provide support to people with brain and other neurotrauma injuries, educate others about neurotrauma through community outreach, give back to the community through Hui activities and events, and offer its products to sustain the group by collecting enough funds to purchase materials for crafting activities. For more information, contact Val Yamada at 808-385-5462.

Support group title: **MAUI MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER STROKE SUPPORT GROUP** Format: Virtual

Dates: **Third Thursday of each month** Time: 5:00 – 6:00 pm HST

To join the meeting: Request the meeting link from Mariah Mossman at

[mariah.mossman@kp.org](mailto:mariah.mossman@kp.org) (email contact preferred) or call 1-808-442-5773 Additional information: <https://www.mauihealth.org/calendar/?Topic=Stroke>



Support group title: **Kona Brain Injury Support Group**

Format: Hybrid – In-person in Kona, HI, and online via Zoom

Dates: **Second Wednesday of each month**

Time: Varies to accommodate speakers or for other reasons, so always check the start time

To join the meeting online: Go to Zoom at [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com). In the upper right-hand corner, click “Join Meeting” and enter Meeting ID 808 274 6477. You will be placed in the virtual waiting room and the host will let you into the meeting.

To join the meeting in person: The meeting location is Anderson Wealth Planning, 75-1000 Henry Street, Suite 200. (In the same building as Planet Fitness.)

Additional information: Contact Karen Klemme at [kklemme@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:kklemme@hawaii.rr.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2671644676391469>

Support group title: **QUEEN’S MEDICAL CENTER STROKE SURVIVORS ONLINE SUPPORT**

**GROUP: HOW TO THRIVE ON OUR ISLANDS AFTER STROKE**

Format: Virtual

Dates: **Second Wednesday of each month** Time: 5:30 – 7:00 pm HST

Additional information: Free but register online to get Webex link.

<https://www.queens.org/events/survivor-stroke-online-support-group-how-to-thrive-on-our-islands-after-stroke-2/?occurrence=2022-02-09&time=1644427800>

State and National Virtual Support Groups for Brain Injuries,  
Head Injuries and Caregivers

<https://www.biausa.org/public-affairs/media/virtual-support-groups>

American Stroke Association Stroke Support Group Finder

<https://www.stroke.org/en/stroke-support-group-finder>

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*Sources for the above are from: Neurotrauma Newsletter, Pacific Disabilities Center, John A Burns School of Medicine; and Brain Injury Association of America*

## BIHI WELCOMES TWO NEW DIRECTORS TO THE BOARD



**PAIGE ONISHI**

Paige is the Chief Operating Officer for the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, a 501(c)(3) organization. The organization recently set up a resource center within weeks of the Maui Wildfire at the Maui Mall. They have provided wraparound services for over 3,000 individuals augmenting the work of FEMA and insurance companies, assisting with document preparation and providing mental health and employment assistance. The Council has also graduated hundreds of individuals in OSHA, HazMat classes and has recently begun a CDL (commercial driver's license) program for Native Hawaiians.

Paige says her interest in brain injury stems from her many years as a member of the Pilot International Clubs whose mission is "to influence positive change in communities throughout the world. To do this [Pilot's] come together in friendship and service focusing on encouraging brain injury safety and health and supporting those who care for others.

Paige was involved with the Brain Injury Association of Hawaii dating back to 2014 when the Resource Center was one of the projects for which the local Pilot club provided hands on and financial assistance.



**ROSE EVELYN  
FRIEDHEIM, PSY.D**

Rose Evelyn Friedheim is a brain injury survivor and a psychologist. She recently completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Hamakua Health Center on the Big Island. While there, she provided in-person and virtual therapy to children, families, individuals, and groups. She offered her patients family psychotherapy, parent-child psychotherapy, caregiver coaching and child play therapy.

Rose designed a therapeutic environment for children tailored to floor play and offered outdoor treatment aligned with their Hawaiian cultural values. She also designed and started a Kupuna Support Circle, offering group therapy for kupuna experiencing isolation.

Rose is drawn to the mission of integrative behavioral health services and the restoration of Hawaiian healing practices. She is a certified somatic Eco therapist, valuing the integration of indigenous Hawaiian wisdom and earth-based relationships.

Rose has extensive experience doing initial patient screenings. She is committed to engaging with her patients during and after their treatment. She loves to be part of integrative treatment teams, focusing on preventative healthcare and early intervention services for patients from keiki to kupuna.

## ***I SEE YOU ~ I HEAR YOU PROGRAM***

### **THE HONOLULU PSYCHOLOGY COLLECTIVE CONTINUES TO OFFER TALK STORY SESSIONS FOR BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS. THE SESSIONS ARE OFFERED AT NO COST TO MEMBERS**

The Honolulu Psychology Collective is a private group therapy practice founded by Brain Injury Association of Hawaii Board member Allana Coffee, Ph.D. and her husband Jerry Coffee, LCSW. Both Allana and Jerry have been in practice for a total of 40 years. They have combined their experience, knowledge and love of the community to establish and support the Honolulu Psychology Collective (HPC).

HPC is comprised of clinical psychologists, clinical social workers and licensed marriage and family counselors who have a high level of experience, knowledge and compassion.

Honolulu Psychology Collective offers evidence based therapy with warmth and care.



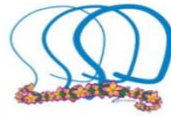
Allana Coffee, Ph.D. and Jerry Coffee, LCSW  
*HPC Founders*

**Brain Injury Awareness includes recognizing the need to address the mental health of brain injury survivors, their family and caretakers**

**If you are a member of the Brain Injury Association of Hawaii and a brain injury survivor or a family member or caretaker of a survivor -- go to**

**<https://honolulupsychologycollective.com/inquiry-form>**

**insert BIOSG or BIHi (in the insurance box) someone will contact you**



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*Mahalo*

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Pilot Club of Honolulu is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) service organization that was founded in 1981 with the same guiding principles as established by Pilot International. Pilot Club of Honolulu is committed to "Do More, Care More and Be More" in our communities every day. Pilot Club of Honolulu members volunteer and meet  
[pilotclubofhonolulu.org](http://pilotclubofhonolulu.org)



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