



National Association
OF
State Head Injury Administrators

4330 East West Highway
Suite 301

Bethesda, MD 20814

301-656-3500

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Action Alert! – Urgent Appropriations Alert

NOTE: Congress is adjourned for the Memorial Day Recess May 28-June 1st

Greetings NASHIA Members:

Both the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees will be finalizing their FY 2008 Labor, HHS (Health and Human Services) and Education Appropriations bills in the next several weeks. In fact, the House subcommittees may even begin drafting their recommendations before Memorial Day Recess. As you may know, the President has proposed to ***eliminate*** the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal TBI Program for the third year in a row. This is the only Federal program that provides funding to States and Protection & Advocacy Systems to increase service capacity and access to services for individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families.

While Congress has just passed a Budget Resolution allowing more funding for HHS programs for FY 2008, the President has already threatened to veto domestic programs that are appropriated above his request. Therefore, once again, TBI advocates will have to convince Congress that all of the programs funded under the TBI Act, which also includes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveillance, public education and prevention programs, are of utmost importance.

ACTION: Contact your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and urge them to fund the TBI Act Programs at **\$30** million in the FY 2008 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations bill. This would include **\$15** million for the HRSA State Grant Program, **\$6** million for the PATBI Grant Program and **\$9** million for the CDC TBI program. Further information is available on the NASHIA website: <http://www.nashia.org>. Ask your council or board members, other state disability councils, advocacy organizations, individuals with traumatic brain injury, families and providers to help with this process. Even with the recent national coverage on traumatic brain injury associated with war injuries, there is reluctance to increase spending for developing community and long-term care and supports. It will take many voices to make a difference!

To identify your federal legislators and their contact information, visit <http://www.congress.org> and enter your zip code. You can send an email or fax containing some of the talking points listed below. The most effective way is to call them directly. You may call the Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and ask for the Member's office. Then, ask to speak to the staff who handles appropriations or health care or disability issues.

TALKING POINTS:

- The TBI Act is the *only* Federal program focused on issues faced by individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families; and is the *only* Federal program assisting States to address these unique and complex service needs.
- Increased funding is needed for the HRSA Federal TBI Grant Program to restore State grants to at least the level awarded in 1997 (\$200,000).
- Last year's Institute of Medicine (IOM) report noted the strength of the HRSA Federal TBI Program is enabling States to leverage other funding resources, as well as to maximize resources across State systems to better serve and coordinate services.

- The IOM evaluation also noted that the program is administered by less than a skeletal staff, and that increased funding is needed to support administration staff and infrastructure to effectively administer and systemically review the program, and to provide national leadership and resources on the special and complex needs of individuals with traumatic brain injury.
- The HRSA Federal TBI Grant Program affords people with traumatic brain injury protection and advocacy (P&A) services to help them to access services, make sure their legal and human rights are protected, and to make sure they are free from abuse and neglect.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as the result of the funding, obtains much needed data on incidence and prevalence of traumatic brain injury to help States and the Federal government plan for services and develop prevention strategies.
- While much work has been done in developing service delivery (cite examples that are pertinent in your State), there are still gaps in service delivery that present hardships on individuals with TBI and the family that make it difficult for individuals to live and work in the community without supports (cite specific gaps in your State and how that impacts the lives of individuals and their families).
- TBI is also becoming the signature wound of the Iraq War as a growing number of soldiers are suffering from blast injuries. Initially, brain injuries may go undiagnosed when there are other physical combat injuries present only to be discovered later.

To schedule an appointment for the Memorial Day Recess you can find the local district office information at this same web site – <http://www.congress.org> – when you type in your zip code.

*This **Action Alert** was prepared for NASHIA members by Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, on behalf of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee, chaired by Debra Kamen. To see NASHIA's Public Policy Platform click on www.nashia.org.*

NASHIA is assisting State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families.