



National Association  
OF  
State Head Injury Administrators

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## Action Alert! – Urgent Appropriations Alert

### Greetings NASHIA Members:

The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote soon on funding for FY '08 for Labor, Health and Human Services and Education departments - maybe **Wednesday, July 18**. We need a big, bipartisan yes vote for these vital services.

**Action:** Please call **800-965-4701** - ask to be connected to your Representative. Tell the staffer who answers: "Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_, a constituent of Representative \_\_\_\_\_. **Please tell him/her to vote FOR the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.** The bill contains many important programs for people with disabilities, including **funding for the HRSA and CDC TBI Programs.** The HRSA TBI program is the only federal program helping states to develop and improve services desperately needed by individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families. It also provides funding to Protection & Advocacy Systems to help individuals to access these systems through advocacy. A vote for this bill will help the citizens with traumatic brain injury and their families in this district and state."

**Why your call is necessary.** The President has threatened to veto funding that exceeds his proposals - and his proposals not only sharply reduce funding for job training, mental health care, nutrition for the elderly, rural health and other community services, but calls for elimination of the HRSA Federal TBI Program! After a final bill is worked out between the House and Senate, it will take a two-thirds vote in each body to reject a presidential veto. A strong vote in the House now might discourage a veto; if not, it will help us demand consistent support for these critical needs.

### Background

On June 11, the House Appropriations Committee adopted the Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education's recommendation of level funding for the HRSA TBI Act Programs (\$8.91 million). The Committee recommended a slight increase for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention TBI program.

Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended the following in its report language with regard to the HRSA TBI Program:

The Committee provides \$10,000,000 for the traumatic brain injury program. The fiscal year 2007 comparable level was \$8,910,000 and the budget request for fiscal year 2008 did not include any funding for this program. The program supports implementation and planning grants to States for coordination and improvement of services to individuals and families with traumatic brain injuries as well as protection and advocacy. Such services can include: pre-hospital care, emergency department care, hospital care, rehabilitation, transitional services, education, employment, and long-term support. The Committee notes that brain injury is a signature injury of service in Iraq and that the returning National Guard soldiers rely on community-based systems of care. The Committee includes \$3,400,000 for protection and advocacy services, as authorized under section 1305 of Public Law 106-310.

**While the House proposed funding is not as great as we'd like to see in the final bill, it is still important that every Member of Congress hear from you about the importance of the TBI program.**

To identify your congressman/woman and his/her 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 also call the Capitol Switchboard at the Washington, D.C. phone number -- (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.

**Please forward this message to everyone you know.**

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*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 [http://www.nashia.org/policy/policy\\_pi.html](http://www.nashia.org/policy/policy_pi.html).*

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