



National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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July 12, 2006

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Ranking Member

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
123 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member Harkin:

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) asks that you include \$30 million for all programs funded under the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act. Specifically, NASHIA requests \$21 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal TBI State and Protection and Advocacy Services Grant Programs, and \$9 million to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention TBI program. As the Institute of Medicine (IOM) study recently noted, this is a “modest federal program with broad ambitions”. Without increased federal support, it is questionable whether states can sustain and capitalize on the improvements in service delivery that have been made to date, especially considering that the number of Americans with traumatic brain injury continue to increase each year as the result of motor vehicle crashes, falls, sporting/recreational injuries, and combat, thus, adding even more stress to state systems.

Originally passed in 1996 (P.L. 104-166) and reauthorized in 2000 as part of the Children’s Health Act (P.L. 106-310), the TBI Act is the only federal law that specifically addresses the rehabilitation and long-term care issues faced by 5.3 million Americans with traumatic brain injury who have cognitive, emotional, physical, or a combination of problems associated with their injuries.

The TBI Act programs provides assistance to states, state protection and advocacy systems, and other national organizations to address incidence and prevalence, prevention, education, research and community-living for people living with traumatic brain injury and their circles of support. Due to the programs' successes, H.R. 5738 has been recently introduced to reauthorize the TBI Act programs and a senate version is expected to be introduced soon.

Since 1997, HRSA has awarded grants to states ranging from \$75,000 for planning grants to grants originally in the amount of \$200,000 for states to address unserved or underserved individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families. Over time, these grants known as implementation or post-demonstration grants were reduced to \$100,000 as more states began applying for assistance. This year, 41 states and territories are receiving grants to improve access to services with states receiving \$100,000 and territories receiving \$70,000. The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) is requesting that the HRSA Federal TBI State Grant Program be increased to \$15 million so that all participating states may return to the \$200,000 level of support.

NASHIA also supports \$6 million for the state-based TBI Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Services Program. The past three years, Congress has only appropriated \$3 million for the HRSA P&A Services Program. A \$6 million appropriation would increase allotments in all states and ensure that each state can provide a significant program of brain injury protection and advocacy, with an appropriate level of staff time and expertise.

The IOM study concluded that continued federal support is necessary to build an effective system to meet the needs of individuals with TBI and their families. Therefore, we request your support for funding the TBI Act as amended, in the amount of \$30 million for FY 2007. We thank you for your continued leadership and support on behalf of individuals and families affected by brain injury.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Capuco", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Capuco, Psy.D.
President, NASHIA