Dear NASHIA Member,

Two weeks from today, the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) will hold its annual Awareness Day activities, while the whole week is being observed as Brain Awareness Week. On Wednesday, March 18th, 2015, the CBITF will host the Awareness Fair, which will be held in the Rayburn House Office Building, First Floor Foyer, from 10am -- 2pm; the Briefing, "Finding the New Normal: Post Injury Supports and Services that Make a Difference," from 2:30 -- 4pm. A reception will cap off the day at 5:30pm to celebrate the work of the Task Force in providing awareness and educational opportunities on brain injury issues. NASHIA will exhibit materials at the Fair; Bill Ditto will participate on the Briefing panel; and NASHIA will co-sponsor the reception. Thanks to all who are donating money to help NASHIA. We are still accepting donations to enable us in these endeavors. You may donate by going to www.nashia.org.

In keeping with the overall Brain Awareness Week, on Tuesday, March 17th, the Briefing, "Surveillance: Building the Evidence to Address Prescription Drug Overdoses, Violence and Traumatic Brain Injuries," will be held in the Russell Senate Office Building, Room 385, from 2:-3:30pm. On Thursday, the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus will sponsor a morning Briefing, "Brain Health Breakthroughs: Good News for Service Members, Students and Seniors," from 9am -- 10:30am in the Gold Room, Rayburn House Office Building. Read further for more information regarding these Briefings.

If you are planning to attend the Awareness Day events and wish to meet with your congressional delegation, you may ask Rebeccah Wolfkiel, NASHIA Governmental Relations, for assistance in arranging appointments. You may call her at 202-480-8901 or e-mail her at rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com. Read further for assistance in setting up appointments and talking points. Click to read the NASHIA Public Policy Platform for the 114th Congress; NASHIA public policy brochure; and handout regarding FY 2016 appropriations for TBI Act programs. Additional information is available on the NASHIA website under Public Policy Priorities, Key Issues and Get Involved pages.

Unable to attend? For those of you who are unable to attend this event you may still help promote TBI awareness by e-mailing or calling your congressional delegation and inviting them to the CBITF events and to let them know about the issues affecting individuals with TBI and their families in your State. Please feel free to distribute this e-mail to enlist support from other disability and health care coalitions in your State in support of TBI issues. Meanwhile, we look forward to seeing you at the Awareness Day Fair for those who are coming!
The American College of Preventive Medicine, American Psychological Association, American Physical Therapy Association, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Association of State Head Injury Administrators, Safe Kids Worldwide, Safe States Alliance and Trust for America's Health, along with the Injury and Violence Prevention Network invite you to a Congressional briefing

SURVEILLANCE: Building the Evidence to Address Prescription Drug Overdoses, Violence, and Traumatic Brain Injuries

Tuesday, March 17, 2015
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Russell Senate Office Building, Room 385

This briefing will focus on the vital role of using data to prevent injuries and violence, with a focus on violent deaths, prescription drug overdoses and traumatic brain injuries. Speakers will describe the role of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), and share examples of existing surveillance efforts within states and their importance for research, identifying prevention strategies and healthcare service planning. Panel members include:

Grant Baldwin, PhD, MPH, Director, Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention, NCIPC, CDC
James Mercy, PhD, Director, Division of Violence Prevention., NCIPC, CDC
Karyl Thomas Rattay, MD, MS, Director, Delaware Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services
Maryann Mason, PhD, Assistant Research Professor, Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, Principal Investigator, Illinois National Violent Death Reporting System
Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

For more information, please contact amber.wiliams@safestates.org or (770)-690-9000.
Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill

sponsored by:
Congressional Brain Injury Task Force

Wednesday, March 18th, 2015

Brain Injury Awareness Fair
10:00 am -- 2:00 pm
First Floor Foyer of the House Rayburn Office Building

Congressional Briefing
Finding a New "Normal": Post-Injury Supports and Services That Make a Difference
2:30 pm -- 4:00 pm
121 Cannon House Office Building

Speakers:
A panel discussion moderated by
Bobby Silverstein
Principal, Powers, Pyles, Sutter, & Verville
featuring:

Mac Fedge, TBI Survivor
Kathy Fedge, TBI Family Caregiver

William A.B. Ditto, MSW, Chair of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee

Matt Breiding, PhD
Commander, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
Traumatic Brain Injury Team Lead

David Williamson, M.D.
Neuropsychiatrist & Medical Director, Inpatient Traumatic Brain Injury Program,
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
Congressional Reception
Celebrating Brain Injury Awareness Month
5:00 - 7:00 pm
B-339, Rayburn House Office Building

Co-sponsored by:

Brain Health Breakthroughs:
Good News for Service Members, Students and Seniors

Reps. Earl Blumenauer and Cathy McMorris Rodgers, as co-chairs of the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus, invite you to a briefing to hear from scientific experts about new brain health breakthroughs -- as well as from a retired Navy SEAL, who will speak about his personal experiences after a brain injury and his dedication to improving the brain health of warriors.

Thursday, March 19, 2015
9:00-10:30 am (breakfast will be served)
Gold Room, Rayburn House Office Building

Brain health among military service members has risen to the forefront of our national discourse. Advanced reasoning skills in American students are falling behind those of other developed countries. Among healthy adults, cognitive brain performance peaks, on average, in our early 40s, and estimates suggest the number of those living with Alzheimer’s disease will triple by 2050.

The latest cognitive neuroscience research shows that there are ways to improve brain health in
people of all ages and stages. New scientific discoveries show that neuroscientists can optimize brain function adding years to high cognitive performance, and mitigate losses from medical, psychological and neurological setbacks across the lifespan that result in improved real-life outcomes.

Speakers:

**Sandra Bond Chapman, PhD**  
is the Founder and Chief Director of the Center for BrainHealth at The University of Texas at Dallas, Dee Wyly Distinguished University Chair, and Professor of Behavioral and Brain Sciences. She is actively studying and discovering informative pathways to improve brain function and cognitive performance in health, injury and disease. As a cognitive neuroscientist with more than 40 funded research grants, Chapman collaborates with scientists around the world to solve some of the most important issues concerning the brain and its health.

**Mark D'Esposito, MD**  
is a Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology and Director of the Henry H. Wheeler, Jr. Brain Imaging Center at the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also Director of the Neurehabilitation Unit at the Northern California VA Health Care System and Adjunct Professor of Neurology at UCSF. He has authored over 300 research publications as well as six books on the topics of behavioral neurology and cognitive neuroscience.

**Lt. Morgan Luttrell**  
is a retired United States Navy SEAL. After nine combat deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, he enrolled at The University of Texas at Dallas to pursue an advanced degree in applied cognitive neuroscience.

This is one in a series of Congressional Neuroscience Caucus Briefings that seek to promote a better understanding of how the brain develops, functions, and ages. The Caucus also seeks to raise awareness about the millions of Americans afflicted with neurological disorders or mental illnesses.

Please RSVP to Megan Anderson Brooks at mbrooks@dc-crd.com or 202-484-1100.

**Contacting Members of Congress:**

Remember, when contacting your Representative or Senator to:

1. Identify yourself as a constituent. Explain that you are calling to invite them to the Brain Injury Awareness Day Fair activities, and that you are in support of TBI Act program funding. Explain how brain injury affects you. If you have examples of how TBI Act program funding has impacted activities and services in your State, be sure to tell them. Example:

"Hello, I am ____ and I am a constituent of your district/State, and am calling to invite you to the events sponsored by the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force on Wednesday, March 18, 2015. I will be attending the events that day and would like for you to come for some or all of the events, which includes a Fair, Briefing and reception. If you do not have a copy of the agenda, I would be happy to provide to you either now over the phone, or by e-mail or fax. These events will feature best practices in brain injury prevention, research and services and supports offered by federal and State programs. If you have time, I would like to meet with you specifically to talk about brain injury in our State and leave you resources and contacts so that you may better help constituents who may call you seeking assistance. Also, I would like to talk to you about funding for the TBI Act programs and the importance of federal funding to help us better serve our State's citizens with TBI and their families. Will you have time to attend any of the Awareness Day events and/or meet with..."
me while I am in D.C.?

2. Say thank you. If you e-mail or fax your representatives/senators, be sure to include your name and contact information.

**Talking Points:**

* TBI is the signature condition of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a growing number of soldiers are suffering from blast and other related injuries. Brain injuries may go undiagnosed even when there are other physical combat injuries present. TBI State programs often fill the gaps for information, resources and identification.

* The TBI Act is the only Federal legislation focused specifically 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 HHS Federal TBI State Grant Program to ensure funding for every State, Territory and the District of Columbia. Currently, less than half of the States receive a grant to improve and expand services for individuals with TBI and their families.

* The HHS Federal TBI Protection and Advocacy 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 TBI Act, obtains much needed data on incidence and prevalence of traumatic brain injury to help States and the federal government plan for services and to develop prevention strategies, such as assistance with return to play guidelines pertaining to sports-related concussions.

* Funding to the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) supports 16 TBI Model Systems that provides much needed research on best practices and service delivery, now located in the HHS Administration for Community Living.

* While much work has been done in developing service delivery, 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 EXAMPLES THAT ARE PERTINENT TO YOU)

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**Congressional Visits**

If you plan to be in Washington, D.C., we encourage you to meet with your Representatives and Senators. If you do not know who your representative is or who your senators are, you may find that information on the House/Senate websites, type in your zip code, which will link you to your representative for information on his/her office address, phone number and e-mail.

You may also call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for the Member's office. Then, ask to set up a meeting with the staff who handles appropriations or health care or disability issues. Be sure to let them know you are a constituent. And, invite them to the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Awareness events. You should schedule appointments 60-90 minutes apart so that you have time to get from one office building to another. To see a map of the key House and Senate buildings click here. Leave plenty of time for security lines and to eat or rest between visits. Remember too, that Congressional staff may run behind in their appointments.
**Coordinate with your state BIA affiliate, alliance and other advocates**
Since there may be other people from your State planning to attend Awareness Day activities, it is advisable to coordinate with your state Brain Injury Association or Alliance, Protection & Advocacy agency, and any others attending to let them know you've scheduled congressional visits and to coordinate your message accordingly.

**Prepare for the appointment**
Members of Congress and their staff are very busy. It is important for advocates to tell their story quickly and to make specific requests for improvements in treatment, research and other services for both civilian and military populations. You may use NASHIA materials, and you may want to include materials specific to your State with regard to State brain injury services, Federal grants that you may administer and your State priorities to leave with staff. You may also want to leave a business card or contact(s) on State programs to help them with constituency issues. NASHIA materials may be downloaded from the NASHIA website and/or stop by the NASHIA exhibit at the Fair to pick up materials.

**Directions to House Rayburn Building:**
*By taxi:* ask to be taken to the House Rayburn Building, Independence Avenue entrance. This entrance leads to the basement floor. Take stairs directly behind guards to the first floor. Foyer is directly across from staircase.

*By car:* park at Union Station and either cab to the other side of the Capitol or walk across to Independence Avenue. The Rayburn Building is the farthest West of all the Capitol Hill Buildings, between First Street, NW and South Capitol Street, and between Independence Avenue and C Street, SW.

**Follow-up after the visit**
Once you are back home, please be sure to send a thank-you note to each person/office you visited. Also, please let Susan Vaughn (publicpolicy@nashia.org) and Rebecca (Becky) Wolfkiel (rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com) know what was discussed and if follow-up information was requested. Susan and Becky will be available that day to help with any questions you may have or any information you may have learned from your visit. You may also contact Susan prior to the Hill Day if you have any questions.

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This Action Alert was prepared by
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**Rebeccah Wolfkiel**, NASHIA Governmental Relations Consultant, rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators | PO Box 878 | Waitsfield | VT | 05673

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