



## Uniting for Brain Injury Awareness Month

### NASHIA Celebrates March Brain Injury Awareness Month: Spotlight on North Dakota

During March, the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) will feature stories about the impact of brain injury on individuals and families, as well as resources and initiatives developed to provide supports and assistance. This week, NASHIA features the story of Matt, who experienced a brain injury at a young age, and the North Dakota Brain Injury Network where Matt is now an intern. Have a story to tell? Send to Susan Vaughn at [publicpolicy@nashia.org](mailto:publicpolicy@nashia.org). Meanwhile, you may access NASHIA's Awareness Campaign materials [here](#).



### Meet Matt -- Who is Working to Help Others

Meet Matt White from Bismarck, North Dakota. Matt suffered a brain injury when he was just 14 years of age. Suffering from headaches which were worsening, the doctors determined that after reviewing a CT scan he needed a craniotomy for drainage of frontal intracranial abscess. Doctors removed portions of his skull to clear a resulting sinus infection that had invaded his cranial cavity and replaced it with metal plates to help him heal from his brain surgery. He was placed in an induced coma for 30 hours. Once awake, he began the long road to recovering involving healthcare professionals, including physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists.



Today, Matt is an intern for the Center for Rural Health-North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN). He is majoring in rehabilitation and human services with a minor in psychology at the University of North Dakota. Matt hopes that one day he'll be a certified rehabilitation counselor and that his personal experience will help others who have gone through a life-altering event such as a brain injury. "Whether it's wearing a helmet, or recognizing the signs that something is not right with your head, always protect your noggin," he said.

Matt often accompanies Rebecca Quinn, NDBIN Program Director, when she conducts educational presentations on recognizing and diagnosing brain injuries. Rebecca says Matt has developed brain injury learning guides for support groups in his short time at NDBIN, and when it comes to promoting the project through social media, he is the go-to guy. "His past

experiences have enhanced his education and allows him to have a deeper understanding about working with individuals dealing with TBI.”

(The information in the article is taken from the fall 2017 NDBIN Newsletter with permission.)



Funded by the North Dakota Department of Human Services, the North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) provides information and support to individuals with brain injury and family members, and to assist them with navigating the service system. Since 2013, NDBIN has been working throughout North Dakota toward raising awareness of brain injury prevention.

The NDBIN program office is located at the Center for Rural Health, University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences in Grand Forks, North Dakota. NDBIN staff provide information through outreach and education; referral services; resource facilitation; employment services; peer support; social activities; and more. Eligible individuals must be a legal resident of North Dakota and have experienced a brain injury.

In 2017, NDBIN launched the Unmasking Brain Injury started by Hinds' Feet Farm to not only create awareness for brain injury, but to also give survivors a voice. The project allows individuals with brain injury to create an art mask to tell their story as a means to educate others of what it is like to live with a brain injury. It also gives brain injury survivors an outlet to show others that those living with this disability are like anyone else.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the NDBIN.



### Celebrating March Brain Injury Awareness Month

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, North Dakotans will celebrate Brain Injury awareness Day at the state Capitol with advocates sharing personal stories and educating state legislators. Among the planned activities, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum will sign a Brain Injury Awareness Month proclamation.

The 2019 Mind Matters Conference on Brain Injury will be held March 27-28, 2019, at the Baymont Inn & Suites, Mandan, North Dakota. The annual two-day conference features nationally renowned speakers and highlights new research, trends, practice strategies, and collaborative models of care.



NDBIN is offering free cards as a new promotional and educational item. Each card features unique brain injury facts. The cards are limited to North Dakotans only (quantities are limited).