



Talking Points: FY 2009 Appropriations for TBI Act Programs

For the fourth straight year, **President Bush has recommended the elimination of the HRSA Federal TBI Grant Program!** It is critical that advocates urge their representative and senators to fund this crucial program.

Background

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program awards grants to States, Territories and District of Columbia to develop and expand access to service delivery and to state Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Systems to expand advocacy services to individuals with TBI and their families. In keeping with the TBI Act of 1996, as amended, Congress also appropriated funding to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct surveillance, prevention and public education programs. The TBI Act also directs the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct basic and applied research in brain injury.

The highest level that Congress has appropriated for the HRSA Federal TBI Program was in FY 2003, which was \$9.5 million total (\$6.5 million for the State Grant Program and \$3 million for the P&A Grant Program). Since then, the spending amount for the HRSA Federal TBI Program has been reduced each year through a series of rescissions imposed on Federal programs. **At the same time the number of States and Territories participating in the State Grant Program has increased.** Currently, 48 States and Territories are receiving funding from HRSA. However, the amount of \$118,600 available to States is still less than the initial Implementation Grant Awards of \$200,000 in 1997.

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 States and P&A Systems to meet the growing needs of individuals with TBI, including returning troops who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) 2006 study noted the strength of the HRSA Federal TBI Program in 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.

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- 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).

Tips for E-mailing or Faxing to Your Representative and Senator:

- Include your address/phone so the office holder may respond to you.
- Keep your message short and to the point.
- Clearly state that you want your legislator to support increased funding for the Traumatic Brain Injury Act Programs administered by the US Department of Health and Human Services in the opening paragraph (ex., I am writing to urge your support for).
- Why you want the legislator to take the position. Tell of your personal interest or connection.
- Offer to provide further information upon request and/or include an overview of TBI and service delivery that is pertinent to your State, i.e. incidence and prevalence, a description of needs, and current service delivery (brief summary or fact sheet).
- Remember not to use acronyms or abbreviations.
- Thank the representative or senator for addressing the needs of the 5.3 million Americans living with disability as a result of traumatic brain injury.

To identify your congressman/woman and senators and their contact information, visit www.congress.org and enter your zip code. You can send an email or fax containing some of the talking points. 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.

This update was prepared by Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, on behalf of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee, chaired by Debra S. Kamen.
