



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE HEAD INJURY ADMINISTRATORS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Concussion Surveillance System

What is the purpose of the National Concussion Surveillance System (NCSS)?

The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Pub. Law 115-377) authorized \$5 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Injury Center to establish a National Concussion Surveillance System (NCSS). The purpose of the NCSS is to produce a nationally representative estimate of brain injury and capture detailed information on the cause, nature, and extent of the injury.

Why is the NCSS needed?

Unfortunately, while brain injuries (BI) are considered a significant public health issue in the United States, and the leading cause of death and disability in both older adults and youth, existing national data underestimate the prevalence of brain injury across the country. Most estimates come solely from data collected through emergency department (ED) admissions, which is not reflective of the many individuals who do not seek care for concussions, seek care outside of emergency departments, or those who do are not reported.

A 2014 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, "Sports-Related Concussions in Youth: Improving the Science, Changing the Culture," recommended that a national surveillance system be implemented in order to address the gaps with regard to existing data systems.

How would the data be collected?

The CDC Injury Center conducted a pilot to test the NCSS using a random-digit dial telephone survey of U.S. households in 2018-2019. The NCSS pilot used computer-assisted telephone interviewing to gather information on brain injuries experienced in the preceding 12 months. Preliminary results classified a respondent as having experienced a TBI if they reported a hit to the head plus at least one TBI sign or symptom, such as loss of consciousness or nausea/vomiting.

The NCSS pilot found that adult respondents reported more than 30 times as many TBIs in the past 12 months compared to estimates using ED data from national datasets, while children and adolescents reported approximately 17 times as many TBIs in the past 12 months as compared to estimates using ED from national datasets.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, Congress provided \$500,000 for the NCSS. This funding was used to add five questions related to brain injury on the National Health Information Survey. In FY 2023, Congress provided \$1.5 million for the NCSS. While CDC is still determining how this funding will be used, they plan to move forward with building up an official NCSS.

Why does the program need additional funding?

The pilot program of the NCSS was a one-time survey that evaluated the methodology of collecting self-reported BI information and validated a BI case definition. The questions added to the National Health Information Survey will provide national data that is necessary but is limited in the questions it is able to ask, which provides gaps in the full understanding of nationwide brain injury. The program needs to continue the NCSS on an annual or biannual basis to get a more accurate understanding of the incidence and prevalence of brain injury. CDC needs \$5 million annually to fulfill this mission.

Supporting Organizations

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
Brain Injury Association of America
United States Brain Injury Alliance
AANS/CNS Joint Section on Neurotrauma & Critical Care
Advancing States
Alzheimer's Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPMR)
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Brain Coalition (ABC)
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Sports Medicine
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM)
American Physical Therapy Association
American Trauma Society (ATS)
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN)
Center on Brain Injury Research and Training, University of Oregon
Child Injury Prevention Alliance
Concussion Game Plan
Concussion Legacy Foundation
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Friends of TBI Model Systems
Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory
Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness
International Brain Injury Society
Matthew Gfeller Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
MomsTeam Institute of Youth Sports Safety/SmartTeams Program
National Alliance for Youth Sports
National Association of
State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)
National Safety Council (NSC)
National Youth Sports Health & Safety Institute
North American Brain Injury Society
PINK Concussions
Police Families for Smart Policies
Pop Warner Little Scholars
Safe Kids Worldwide
Safe States Alliance
SCORE Program, Children's National Hospital
Society for Public Health Education
Sports Institute at University of Washington Medicine
The National Concussion Management Center
UGA Concussion Research Laboratory
United States Snowboard and Freeski Association (USASA)
USABaseball
USA Field Hockey
USA Football
USA Lacrosse

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) is a nonprofit organization comprised of State employees and their partners. For further information contact Zaida Ricker, NASHIA Policy and Partnerships, publicpolicy@nashia.org or Rebecca Wolfkiel, NASHIA Executive Director, at execdirector@nashia.org, or visit our website at www.nashia.org.