

NASHIA's March 2021 Brain Injury Awareness Month Campaign: This week's Spotlight is on Tennessee Brain Links and the Department of Health TBI Program.



NASHIA: Working Together Promoting Brain Injury Awareness Month

This Week's State Spotlight: Tennessee

During March, the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) is featuring articles about individuals living with brain injury; State resources, services and initiatives promoting awareness and improving service delivery. This week, NASHIA features **Tennessee** Brain Links and the Tennessee Department of Health Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program.

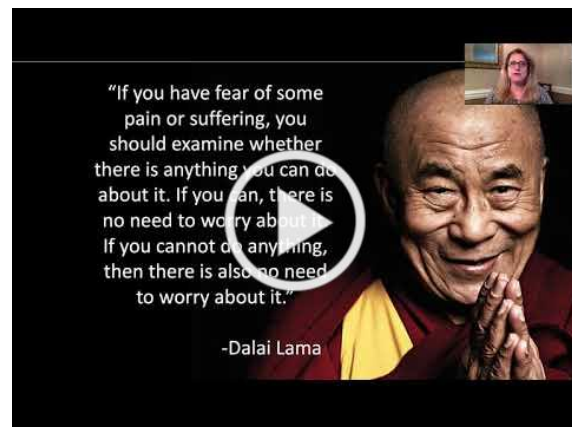
Have a story to share? Send to Susan Vaughn at publicpolicy@nashia.org. Meanwhile, you may access NASHIA's Awareness Campaign materials [here](#).



Brain Links: Expanding Partners and Training Opportunities

Brain Links roots are steeped in partnerships among disability leaders, State agencies and community agencies. Brain Links is part of the Tennessee Disability Coalition -- an alliance of disability organizations and individuals joined to promote the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. The Brain Links Team consists of four brain injury specialists who bring unique skills and passion that strengthens and enriches the success of the program.

Paula Denslow, Brain Links Program Director, began with Project BRAIN as part of the coalition's work in 2003. The program was funded by a Federal



Brain Link Resources:

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) State Grant awarded to the Tennessee Department of Health TBI Program and focused primarily on training and resources for professionals working with school-aged children and youth.

In 2018, with grant funds from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) TBI State Partnership Program, the tools and resources developed by Project BRAIN expanded and enhanced the efforts of Brain Links to equip professionals through customized training and resources designed specifically for professionals working and serving adults, as well as children with brain injury.

Through Paula's leadership, she has partnered with State agencies and other organizations to offer training and resources in order to expand and improve services for children and adults with brain injury. Paula believes sustainable partnerships are very similar to building a meaningful relationship and take time to nurture and cultivate. "You first need to get to know each other, by listening and learning so you can discover each other's needs and wish lists. Then together, begin to develop solutions to accomplish the goals you set to achieve," says Paula.

Brain Links has developed many statewide partnerships and training opportunities across agencies, even through the COVID-19 pandemic. The attendee list for professional development is broad and has been for direct service providers, case managers, social workers, nurses, physicians & healthcare professionals, school professionals as well as community based agencies including those in rural settings.

More About Brain Links

Enriching the lives of Tennesseans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) by training and empowering the professionals serving them.

Brain Links is a statewide team of brain injury specialists. The program equips professionals in Tennessee with current,

Toolkits and other materials have been developed targeted to various professionals and include the following:

[A Guide to Possible Changes After Brain Injury for School-Aged Children and Adults: English & Spanish.](#)

[Brain Health: How to Have a Healthy Brain Throughout Life](#) available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) versions.

["Brain Health" YouTube playlist](#)

["Get Schooled On Concussions \(GSOC\)"](#)

[Recognizing Concussion in People Who Communicate Without Words](#), available in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

[Toolkit for Healthcare Providers](#)

[Toolkit for School Nurses](#)

Additional videos can be found on the Brain Link [YouTube Training Channel](#)

You may also read about [Project BRAIN: A Tennessee Model for Student Transition After Brain Injury](#), which was accepted as an oral presentation for the North American Brain Injury Society's 14th Annual Conference.

Follow Brain Links on Social Media: [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



In 1993, the Tennessee General Assembly established the **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program** in the Department of Health to address the needs of persons with brain injury and their families. The legislation

TBI research-based training and tools to enable them to better serve people with TBI of all ages.

Brain Links provides Tennesseans with:

- Evidence-based TBI trainings tailored to your discipline.
- Toolkits for screening, symptom tracking, reference, parent education and communication with schools.
- Assistance with goal writing and treatment plan development support for rehabilitation, direct service support and related services.
- Educational resources including parent-friendly educational materials.
- Resources for return to home, school or work settings.

Trainings are provided **at no cost** and are tailored to the schedules of those requesting training and their continuing education unit needs.

For more information contact Brain Links at: 615-383-9442 or tbi@tndisability.org or Paula Denslow.

established a general fund reserve, known as the “traumatic brain injury fund,” to fund a registry to connect persons to resources to help with recovery; a TBI coordinator position and additional staff requirements; and grants. In addition, the law established the TBI Advisory Council.

The TBI Program provides grants for home and community-based programs, such as day treatment, housing, supportive living services, education and prevention, behavioral counseling, camp, professional training, and service coordination. Individuals with TBI and their families may seek assistance from one of eight TBI service coordinators located in various non-profit agencies across the State.

The TBI Family Support Program, funded by State funds, also assists individuals with disability due to TBI and their families to remain together in their homes and communities.

The department was awarded an ACL TBI State Program Partner Grant in 2018. For more information contact Ashley Bridgman, Program Director.



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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HEAD INJURY
ADMINISTRATORS**

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.

Support States. Grow Leaders. Connect Partners.

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