

## BRAIN INJURY HEALTH CARE PLEDGE

The concept of health insurance includes protecting people from financial ruin in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury such as brain injury by providing health care services when they need it the most. Evidence-based literature and individual testimonials support the inclusion of protections in health care reform initiatives that address the unique health care needs of persons who sustain brain injuries.

Therefore, I **pledge** to conscientiously work toward the adoption of national health care reform initiatives (including reforms to private sector insurance and public programs) that address the unique health care needs of persons with brain injuries. These initiatives should recognize that brain injury is the start of a lifelong disease process requiring access to a full continuum of medically necessary treatment (including rehabilitation) furnished by accredited programs in the most appropriate treatment setting as determined by the choices and aspirations of the patient and family in concert with an interdisciplinary team of qualified and specialized clinicians.

More specifically, national health care reform should:

1. Recognize that brain injury is not an event or an outcome but is the beginning of a **lifelong disease process that impacts brain and body functions** resulting in difficulties in physical, communication, cognitive, emotional, and psychological performance that undermines health, function, community integration and productive living. Brain injury is also **disease causative and disease accelerative** in that it predisposes individuals to re-injury and the onset of other conditions. Brain injury impacts neurologic disorders such as epilepsy, vision and hearing impairments, psychiatric disorders, and orthopedic, gastrointestinal, urologic, sexual, neuroendocrine, cardiovascular and musculoskeletal dysfunction).
2. Focus on health care that is **medically necessary**. A person with brain injury should have an individualized medical treatment plan that documents specific diagnosis-related goals when the person has a reasonable expectation of achieving measurable functional improvements in a predictable period of time through the provision of treatment of sufficient scope, duration and intensity.
3. Provide access to the full **treatment continuum to manage the disease** that includes early, acute treatment to stabilize the condition followed by acute and specialized post-acute brain injury treatment and rehabilitation, including inpatient, outpatient, day treatment and home health programs, to minimize and/or prevent medical complication, recover function and cope with remaining physical or mental disabilities, and achieve durable outcomes that maintain an optimal level of health, function and independence following brain injury.
4. Ensure that treatment is provided in the **most appropriate treatment setting by accredited programs** (including acute care hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, residential rehabilitation facilities, day treatment programs, outpatient

clinics and home health agencies) **as determined in accordance with the choices and aspirations of the patient and family in concert with an interdisciplinary team of qualified and specialized clinicians.**

5. **Prevent private insurance systems from delaying or denying treatment as a means of transferring the burden of brain injury care to taxpayers** at federal, state and local levels; ensure that both public and private health insurance systems meet the health care needs of people with brain injury; and **avoid using Medicaid and Medicare as the first option for coverage** of people with brain injury.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To sign this pledge and become a supporter, please contact Mandy Spears in Congressman Pascrell's office ([mandy.spears@mail.house.gov](mailto:mandy.spears@mail.house.gov), 5-5751) or Becky Wolfkiel in Congressman Platts' office ([rebeccah.wolfkiel@mail.house.gov](mailto:rebeccah.wolfkiel@mail.house.gov), 5-5836).