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Press Statement
February 4, 2008

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Brain Injury Association of America Condemns President's Fiscal 2009 Budget

(Washington, D.C.) – For the third year in a row, The White House has proposed the complete elimination of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal TBI Program, which provides grants to state agencies and protection and advocacy organizations to improve access to health and other services for individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families.

Increasingly, national policymakers and the American public are coming to understand the dramatic implications of TBI on active duty service members, veterans and civilians alike. In his State of the Union speech last week, President Bush pledged his dedication to meeting the health care needs “of a new war and a new generation.”

“As more service members and veterans join the 1.4 million civilian children and adults who sustain TBIs in the U.S. each year, the lack of priority given to TBI in the President’s budget is deeply disappointing,” said Susan Connors, president and CEO of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), adding, “President Bush just doesn’t get it.”

“My family’s experience demonstrates the interdependence of military and civilian systems of care,” said Dave Woodruff, a member of the BIAA Board of Directors whose brother, ABC anchor Bob Woodruff suffered a severe TBI while covering the war in Iraq. The Federal TBI Program supports coordination among state government agencies and public and private organizations to improve TBI care from trauma to community re-integration. Most military and civilian patients end up living in the community where a complex maze of service systems, if it exists, must be coordinated.

BIAA will work vigorously to restore funding for HRSA's TBI Program, joining with coalition partners at the national level and calling on the highly effective Congressional Brain Injury Task Force to educate their colleagues in Congress and The White House on the need for and value of the Federal TBI Program.

About the Brain Injury Association

Founded in 1980, the mission of the Brain Injury Association of America is to create a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education and advocacy. BIAA and its nationwide network of state affiliates, chapters and support groups represent the 5.3 million Americans who live with a lifelong disability as a result of traumatic brain injury, as well as their families and the researchers, clinicians and professionals who provide treatment and long-term care. For more information about brain injury or the BIAA, visit www.biausa.org.