

# SUPPORT TBI MODEL SYSTEMS FUNDING



## FULLY FUND TBI MODEL SYSTEMS OF CARE

The TBI Model Systems are a collection of 16 research centers providing a multidisciplinary continuum of care that includes emergency and acute medical, rehabilitative, and post-acute services to improve recovery for people with TBI.

In addition to providing direct services, these centers play a pivotal role in building national capacity for high-quality treatment and research for persons with TBI, their families, and the communities in which they reside.

The TBI Model Systems are the only source of long-term data on what happens to people with brain injury across the lifespan, and their findings are critical to identifying and designing future improvements in brain injury treatment. They are a critical source of evidence-based brain injury medicine, and often serve as a “launching pad” for future researchers.

The Model Systems receive grants administered by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) in the Administration for Community Living at the Department of Health and Human Services. In 2008, the Department of Veterans Affairs partnered with NIDILRR to establish VA-TBI Model Systems to investigate recovery and outcomes in the 5 VA Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (PRCs).

BIAA urges Congress to increase funding for the TBI Model Systems by at least \$15 million over the next 5 years to:

- Increase the number of multicenter TBI Model Systems Collaborative Research projects from one to three, each with \$1 million budget;
- Increase the number of competitively funded centers from 16 to 18 while increasing per center support; and
- Increase funding for the National Data and Statistical Center for tracking participants over their lifetime

## BRAIN INJURY IS A CHRONIC CONDITION

Every year, at least 2.8 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury. While most of them fall into the “mild” category, they can cause temporary and permanent neurological impairment. There are more than 5 million people living with a permanent brain injury-related disability – one in 60 Americans.

Brain injury is viewed by healthcare systems and the public as a one-time event, rather than the beginning of what can be persistent medical, physical cognitive and behavioral effects. The idea that brain injury can permanently change a person – their capabilities, their personality, their ability to work and socialize as they once did – is not something most people can understand.

Extensive research has demonstrated brain injury is not just an acute injury, but a chronic condition that affects far more than the brain; it may cause associated conditions that can increase health care costs and complicate recovery. The chronic, long-term effects of brain injury are wide-ranging, and can include fatigue, sensitivity to noise and light, memory loss, mobility problems, chronic migraines, trouble with focus and executive functioning, depression, and anxiety.

Having brain injury recognized as a chronic condition would mean more services and supports across the lifespan; it would open new avenues to treatment and research; and it would go a long way toward educating the public and correcting misconceptions about a condition that impacts millions of Americans.

**Sign up for BIAA’s free e-newsletter, Policy Corner!**  
[www.biausa.org/get-involved](http://www.biausa.org/get-involved)



**For information, contact:**

Rick Willis  
President and CEO  
Brain Injury Association of America  
rwillis@biausa.org  
(703) 761-0750 ext. 646