



Improve Awareness and Understanding of Brain Injury

ABOUT BRAIN INJURY

An acquired brain injury (ABI) is any injury to the brain that is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. There are two types of ABI – non-traumatic, or those injuries caused by an internal force, and traumatic. A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an alteration in brain function or other evidence of brain pathology caused by an external force. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that 2.8 million children and adults sustain TBIs annually and at least 5.3 million live with a TBI-related disability. The cost to society for medical care and lost wages associated with TBI is \$76.3 billion annually.

Individuals with brain injury may experience memory loss, concentration or attention problems, slowed learning, and difficulty with planning, reasoning, or judgment. Emotional and behavioral consequences include depression, anxiety, impulsivity, aggression, and thoughts of suicide. Physical challenges may include fatigue, headaches, difficulty with balance or motor skills, sensory loss, and seizures. Brain injury can lead to respiratory, circulatory, digestive, and neurological diseases, including epilepsy, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease. Poor outcomes after brain injury result from shortened lengths of stay in both inpatient and outpatient treatment settings. Payers point to a lack of sufficient evidence-based research as a primary reason for coverage denial of medically necessary treatment. This occurs particularly when behavioral health services and cognitive rehabilitation are needed.

ABOUT BIAA

Founded in 1980, the mission of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) is to advance brain injury awareness, research, treatment, and education to improve the quality of life for all people affected by brain injury. BIAA is dedicated to increasing access to high quality care and accelerating research. With a network of state affiliates, local chapters, and support groups, BIAA provides help, hope, and healing and serves as the voice of brain injury for individuals who are injured, their families, and the professionals who provide research, treatment, and services.

TAKE A STAND TO PROTECT STUDENT ATHLETES FROM CONCUSSION

The CDC estimates as many as 3.8 million concussions related to sports and recreation occur each year. A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI). Middle and high school students sustain mTBIs while participating in athletics, but many schools do not have the resources to adequately diagnose and treat these injuries. Too often, student athletes return to the field before their brains heal. A repeat concussion can slow recovery and increase the likelihood of having long-term challenges. Repeat concussions can result in second impact syndrome, which can lead to permanent brain damage and even death.

In addition to funding important work at the CDC and introducing legislation to protect student athletes, Congress should:

- Support the Concussion Awareness and Education Act sponsored by Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio) to implement recommendations of the Institute of Medicine in its report, "Sports-Related Concussions in Youth: Improving the Science, Changing the Culture."
- Appropriate \$5 million for the CDC to take to scale the National Concussion Surveillance System, which would provide nationally representative incidence estimates of all TBI, sports- and recreation-related TBI, and TBI-related disability as well as the ability to monitor trends over time, including at the state level. Authorization for funding was included in the Reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury Act of 2018.

Sign up for BIAA's weekly e-newsletter, **Policy Corner**, at biausa.org.



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