

The Brain Injury Association of Arkansas'

Messenger

Walk for Thought Update

In 2007 we were able to build on the success of our first Walk in 2006 with another successful Walk. Our special Thanks to our seven 2007 event sponsors:

Gold: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services –Division of Health – TBI Implementation Project

Silver: Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute
Entergy

Bronze: Wilson, Engstrom, Corum & Coulter, Attorneys
Timber Ridge Ranch NeuroRestorative Services
Byrd Law Firm, PA
Cynthia Low – Keller Williams Realty

Our 2007 Walk was a success. Not only in the terms of money raised, but also in the number of participants and the raised level of awareness by the general public.

Our 2007 Walk cleared over \$7,500. We increased the number of participants from approximately 42 in 2006 to approximately 130 in 2007. Our Grand Marshall, Tera Clark, was featured in several articles in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* prior to the Walk. One of our local television stations, KTHV Channel 11, was present for our Walk and featured our Walk on the evening news that day.

In 2008 we will move our Third Annual Walk For Thought up a week to avoid the Easter weekend. Our Walk will be on Saturday, March 15th. We will again begin the walk in Murray Park (in Little Rock). Walkers will again have a choice between a flat 1-mile and a hilly 5k (3.1-mile) walk. The 5k walk will be up and over the pedestrian bridge over Murray Lock and Dam (known locally as the Big Dam Bridge) and back. The walk will be wheel-chair and stroller accessible.

The walkathon serves as a public awareness event as well as a fund-raiser. Over the next few weeks we will be looking for event sponsors. These are usually individuals or businesses that are willing to make an upfront donation. They will be recognized for their support in various ways, depending on their level of support. Event sponsorship is available at various levels, beginning at \$300. Deadline for applying to be an event sponsor is February 1st.

If you are interested in being an event sponsor or in helping find an event sponsor, please contact Gary Low by phone at 501-416-4742 (Little Rock) or toll-free at 800-497-4387 or by email at glowar@sbcglobal.net for more information.

More information on the Walk and how your can help raise awareness and raise money individually will be sent out about February 15th. In the mean time, **reserve March 15th on your calendar**. Make plans to be a part and get others involved.

Thoughts from Teresa Belew, our President

These are exciting days! This year's Walk for Thought had a terrific Grand Marshall in Tera Clark and media attention, participation as well as more funds raised than ever before. We are the grateful recipients of a Tobacco Settlement Commission Award in the amount of \$21,700 to fund I.M. Brainy Pre-School Projects, help with a speakers' bureau and provide the means for increased awareness and visibility. Many of you have contacts and skills we'll need to call on to develop our speakers' bureau and contact list so that we can begin to move out into the state to get the important message out about

brain injury. We are set to obtain funding to work on even more projects in order to create collaboration and outreach to survivors and their families. Most of all, I am excited about the hard work of our board and their cooperation in getting grant applications completed, planning and direction. Thanks to all they've done, we are positioned to have one of the most productive and progressive years in the history of our association. So much good news. And lots to be excited about. We were visible participants in a state-wide press event for Teen Safe Driving Month, the governor has appointed three of our members to a new task force and we recently added four new board members. If you haven't renewed your membership or if you haven't joined BIA-AR yet, you're missing out...there's a lot going on...you won't want to miss it...and we need your help!

Legislative Update

Representative Sandra Prater (District 42) led a successful effort in the 2007 Legislative Session resulting in the creation of a TBI Task Force:

- ❖ “To study the rates and severity of traumatic brain injuries in Arkansas;
- ❖ To project the incidence of traumatic brain injuries over the next ten (10) years;
- ❖ To develop a strategic plan to ensure an appropriately prepared workforce to treat traumatic brain injuries and provide for rehabilitation services to the extent possible; and
- ❖ To convene stakeholders from health care providers, the health care industry, business, the legislature, and the public.”

The Governor has recently finished naming the various members of the Task Force. The Task Force should be meeting soon. Check our web site for information. Our three representatives on the Task Force are: Terrie Root, Charles Stewart and Dana Gonzales.

We look forward to the recommendations that will come from this task force. We hope their recommendations will lead to a TBI Commission being setup and funded in the 2009 session.

Possible TBI Waiver in the Works

Last year, several meetings were held for the purpose of completing an application for a grant called The Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration Initiative. Those involved were individuals who work in various divisions of the Department of Human Services, advocacy groups, consumers and providers of long term care services and other people interested in or affected by decisions involving the long term care delivery system in Arkansas.

The process required examination of: (1) the current status of the home and community based (HCB) long term care system of care, (2) major initiatives affecting the HCB system, (3) gaps to be addressed in the demonstration program, and (4) what our state proposes to accomplish. One of the gaps identified was specific to traumatic brain injury (TBI). It was determined there is an absence of certain necessary services and supports for persons with TBI to be able to successfully reside in the community. To address this, it was decided that a Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver would be developed and implemented.

What is a Waiver?

Home and community-based waivers, 1915(c), are tools used by states to obtain federal Medicaid matching funds to provide long-term care to patients in settings other than institutions. Waivers must be approved by Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) and are good for three years, after which they may be renewed every five years.

General Information

- Home and community-based care is viewed as a preferable alternative to long-term institutional care.
- Benefits the individual who may remain among friends and family;
- Benefits the state because services may be provided for less than the cost of institutional care.

Income criteria: \$1869.00 in 2007 (All applicants are treated as individuals for income purposes). Resource limit for Individual is \$2000 and Couple is \$3000; exclusions from Resources are treated the same as for SSI, except when one spouse is institutionalized, the other can keep between \$19,020 and \$95,100 based on a formula.

Medical criteria: Participants must be assessed and found to have the same medical necessity as the intermediate level of care in a nursing facility.

There are several steps involved in developing a Medicaid Waiver, among which include:

- Determining the Target Population Definition;
- Determining additional Eligibility Criteria and Process;
- Identifying critical services to be included, including service definitions, rates of reimbursement, benefit limits and so forth;
- Provider requirements; and,
- Quality management issues, including participant safeguards.

Over the summer Money Follows the Person and other DAAS staff conducted a series of forums around the state to gather input from consumers, family members and care givers to start to gather information for a TBI waiver.

On November 2, DAAS hosted a day long TBI forum at Camp Aldersgate. The day included 2 guest speakers, Michael Deegan representing Traumatic Brain Injury program for the state of Kansas and Pam Forducey, PhD, the director of Ingetris Neuroscience Institute and Telehealth.

We also had several break-out sessions, including: Eligibility/Access to programs, Service Priorities and Supportive Living/Housing. We will be compiling this information and using it as we work towards writing a Waiver for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury.

If you are interested in providing comments or would like to be informed of other consumer meetings when they are scheduled, please contact: Julie Kaplan, Program Coordinator, Money Follows the Person, Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Aging & Adult Services, PO Box 1437 Slot S530, Little Rock, AR 72203-1437, Ph: 501-682-8390, Fax: 501-682-8155

Arkansas TBI Implementation Project

The Arkansas Department of Health's (ADH) TBI Implementation Project works with other organizations to improve access to health and other services for individuals with TBI and their families in Arkansas. Requirements of the TBI implementation grant for TBI infrastructure development include: establishing a TBI Statewide Advisory Board, identifying a lead agency, conducting a needs and resources assessment, and developing a TBI State Action Plan.

TBI Needs Assessment

The UAMS Department of Pediatrics/Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute Center for Applied Research and Evaluation is assisting the Department of Health in conducting the needs assessment. Moderated group discussions are being conducted to further assess needs and gaps in service as identified by individuals with TBI, family members, educators, and service providers. The information obtained will aid in the development of a system of services that provides better and more easily accessible support for individuals with TBI and their families. Representatives from the following groups have been recruited to participate in the focus groups:

1. TBI survivors, age 16 or older, who sustained a TBI at least one year prior,
2. Family members of individuals with a TBI,
3. Educators who work with children who have a TBI,
4. Indirect/direct service providers who administer services to TBI survivors.

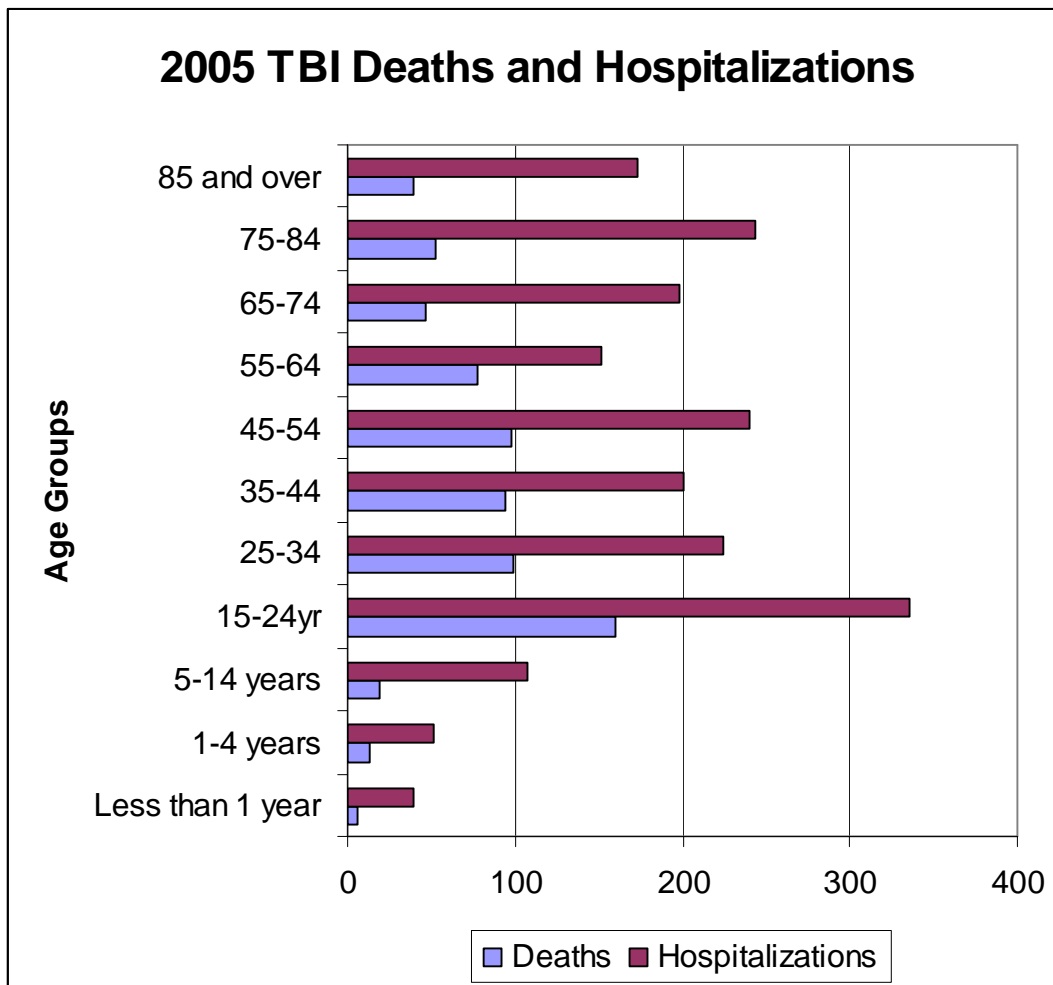
TBI Statistics

We know that there are many people with TBI in Arkansas. Although we suspect that there may be many more Arkansans with TBI who have not been counted, actual numbers compiled by the Health Statistics Branch of the ADH are reported below. The chart and graph of recently released 2005 TBI statistics for the state of Arkansas indicate **comparisons** by age range of the number of TBI-related hospitalizations and deaths. For each age range, the number of TBI related deaths does not include the hospitalizations for that age. Likewise, the number of TBI related hospitalizations for each age range does not include the deaths for that same age range.

Arkansas 2005 TBI Deaths and Hospitalizations

Age	Deaths	Hospitalizations
Less than 1 year	6	39
1-4 years	13	51
5-14 years	19	107
15-24yr	160	336
25-34	99	224
35-44	94	201
45-54	98	240
55-64	78	152
65-74	47	198
75-84	53	244
85 and over	39	173
Total	706	1,965

The TBI related deaths range from a low of 6 infants to a high of 160 among the 15-24 year olds. Persons in the 15-24 age range had both the highest number of TBI related deaths and hospitalizations. The second highest number of TBI related deaths occurred among 25-34 year olds. However, the second highest number of TBI related hospitalizations occurred in the elderly, among the 74-85 year olds.



Documentation of information is critically important for planning for future needs of persons with TBI in Arkansas. Not only are numbers such as those found in the statistical data listed above important, but other information gathering processes such as the TBI needs assessment, written survey, and group discussions will help to inform decision-makers. Legislative and organizational decision-makers are able to use this information to inform their decisions on funding for resources, development of policies, and delivery of services.

Disability Rights Center Update

There are two important advisory councils (one is called an Advisory Board but for this article, both are ACs) focused solely on traumatic brain injury, one advises the Disability Rights Center, Inc. (DRC) TBI program and the other advises (required by law) the State TBI Implementation Project at the Dept. of Health. The DRC-TBI/AC and the State TBI Implementation Project Advisory Board continue their successful collaboration with quarterly meetings and working with Brain Injury Association of Arkansas.

The ACs and representatives from BIA-AR meet together quarterly at DRC in its Anthony Minyard conference room, and at the September meeting the two ACs considered merging. DRC hopes a unified TBI Advisory Board will include over 50% survivors and family members as the DRC AC does now. The following topics were presented at the past two joint AC meetings:

- BIA of Arkansas "Walk for Thought"
- BIA of Arkansas received Tobacco Grant
- BIA of Arkansas Retreat on July 28, 2007
- TBI Implementation Project plans contracts with DRC and BIA-AR
- Follow up with VA of Arkansas on their presentation at last council meeting and AC member involvement & outreach with Veterans throughout AR
- Update on the new TBI Task Force
- Update on the new TBI Waiver by Krista Hughes/Aging & Adult Serv.
- News and materials from federal TBI meetings
- Update on joint committee on TBI Awareness packages and excellent new materials from CDC for coaches on preventing concussions (call us)
- TBI Implementation Project Needs Assessment underway
- TBI DRC advocacy services and issues update

Now that the Governor has appointed the legislated TBI Task Force, BIA-AR, DRC, the TBI Implementation Project, TBI local support groups and a host of important service providers will need to work together to support, assist and provide information to the new Task Force.

If you would like to attend upcoming meetings or be considered for membership in ACs please call DRC toll free at 1-800-482-1774 v/tty or 501-296-1775 v/tty or e-mail us at: **annfullerton@arkdisabilityrights.org**. Check DRC out at **www.arkdisabilityrights.org**.

Remember, DRC is your statewide Protection and Advocacy System for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury. Let us know how we can help.

Resources?

Which professionals in your area understand brain injuries? If someone asked you for the name of a family-doctor, neurologist, OT, PT, Speech Pathologist, or some other professional, who would you recommend? We frequently get requests for the name of a particular type of specialist in a particular part of the state and usually don't have any names to provide. If you know of someone in your area that you would recommend sending a TBI survivor to, please contact BIA-AR and share that name.

The magazine "Neurology Now," from the American Academy of Neurology, is an excellent source of information. It is available at no cost to individuals with neurological disorders (which includes brain injuries), their families and caregivers. To order a subscription, call 800-422-2681 or visit their web site at **www.NeurologyNow.com**.

We wish you a Happy New Year!!!

Association Update

At the December 1st General Membership meeting, four new Board members were elected. Yousef Fahoum (Maumelle), Terrie Root (Little Rock), Charles Stewart (Little Rock), and Garry Teeter (Bryant) were each elected to a three-year term on the Board. Teresa Belew (Little Rock) was reelected to the Board to serve a second three-year term. Mike Bell, whose first term expired, did not seek reelection.

Following the General Membership meeting, the Board met and elected officers for 2008. They are:

President: Teresa Belew (Little Rock)
Vice President: Dana Gonzales, PhD (Little Rock)
Secretary: Deborah Gangluff, ScD (Conway)
Treasurer: Gary Low (Little Rock)

Other members on the Board are: Shaun Best (Smackover), Theresa Driver (Fayetteville), Ann Fullerton (Little Rock), Jim Hamilton (Little Rock), Bill Hartley (Hot Springs), Tribble Moseley (Maumelle), and Larry Thompson (Osceola).

Concussions that can occur in many sports are an ever-present problem as was demonstrated this past season when Darren McFadden suffered a concussion. Many youth coaches are not aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion. This past November we distributed a "Heads Up: Concussions in Youth Sports" kit to the coaches of 77 teams that participated in the Westside Futbol Association's Central Arkansas Soccer Classic Tournament in North Little Rock. The kit was obtained from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We are considering expanding this to coaches in other sports.

The I. M. Brainy Pre-school project is an awareness program that will be presented in 10 pre-schools around the state this spring. We are currently taking request from pre-schools that would be interested in being considered for this presentation.

The BIA-AR is an organization made up of volunteers. There is no paid staff. We apologize for not getting the newsletter out more often but when the volunteers are busy, things don't get done. If you are interested in being the newsletter editor, give us a call. Our Thanks to Krista Hughes for the article on the Medicaid Waiver, to Loretta Alexander for the update on the TBI Implementation Project and to Nan Ellen East for the DRC update.

Earlier this year we received a donation in the Memory of Mary McKay. Our sympathy to her family for their loss but our thanks for their decision to remember her in this manner.

The Brain Injury Association of Arkansas is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit organization.

Our newsletter is also available by email. Contact us by phone at 501-374-3585 (Little Rock) or Toll-Free at 800-235-2443 or by e-mail at info@BrainAssociation.org. Visit our Web Site at www.BrainAssociation.org.

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