

## Living with a Brain Injury: It Could Happen to You!

Mary will never forget the moment she received the telephone call telling her that her 16-year-old son, Josh, had been injured in a bicycle crash. It was a beautiful spring day and she had just finished weeding the flower garden. Josh had dashed out of the house rushing to his varsity soccer practice only minutes before. Time stood still as Mary heard the words "traumatic brain injury" for the first time. What did that mean for her beautiful, bright son with his boundless energy and enthusiasm for life? Will he live? If he lives what could she expect when he came out of surgery?

This story is repeated hundreds of times each year in our state. In fact, TBI strikes seventy-five families each week in North Carolina. VA centers in NC are seeing a significant number of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with TBI and mental health needs. The purpose of this special publication is to raise awareness about the consequences of brain injury, the incidence of brain injury, and provide some resource information for those who need help.

*Sandra Farmer*, President  
Brain Injury Association of NC

# Every 23 Seconds Someone in the U.S. Sustains a Traumatic Brain Injury



## Understanding Brain Injury in North Carolina

*We Need Your Help!*

1-800-377-1464

[www.bianc.net](http://www.bianc.net)



*A Special publication of the*

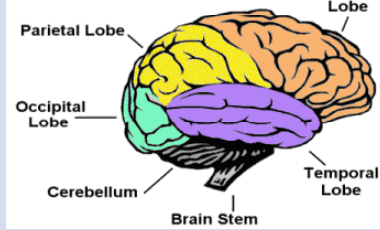
## Brain Injury Association of NC

Offering help, hope, and a voice for people  
with brain injury and their families.

This is a State Partnership Grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration [with the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services] and is subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory progress of the project. Total approved budget 04/01/2009 through 03/31/2010: \$ 384,068.00. Federal Share: \$ 250,000.00 (65%) Non-Federal Resources: \$134,068.00 (35%)

## Consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

### The Human Brain



### Physical Consequences of TBI can include:

- Seizures of all types
- Muscle Spasticity
- Double vision, low vision, even blindness
- Loss of smell or taste
- Speech impairments such as slow or slurred speech
- Headaches or migraines
- Fatigue, increased need for sleep
- Balance problems

### Emotional Consequences of TBI can include:

- Increased anxiety
- Depression & mood swings
- Impulsive Behavior
- More easily agitated

### Cognitive Consequences of TBI can include:

- Short-term memory loss
- Slowed ability to process information
- Trouble concentrating or paying attention for periods of time
- Communication difficulties such as word-finding problems
- Spatial disorientation
- Organizational problems and impaired judgment
- A lack of initiating activities, or once started, difficulties in completing task without reminders

## Focusing on Prevention...

The Brain Injury Association of NC encourages everyone to wear the proper helmet or safety equipment for your sport. Practice responsible driving. Don't drink or text while driving. Be patient with bicyclists and pedestrians on the road.

## When brain injury strikes...

While medical advances and body armor are saving more lives than ever before, we are left with questions of how to prevent these injuries from happening and how to make a difference in the lives of the men, women, children, and their families who experience the trauma of brain injury?

## How do most people sustain a brain injury?

Motor vehicle crashes and falls are the leading causes of severe brain injury. You can look at a person, live next to a person, work with a person, and you may never know they sustained a brain injury. Each brain injury is unique and may result in lifetime challenges.

## How are families affected?

Brain injury affects the whole family. Family members often have a critical role in the recovery process. According to research, caregivers of persons with brain injury struggle more in their lives than people who are caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's.

## Brain Injury Facts For Emergencies

Brain injuries are common and may occur from a bump on the head, an unexpected fall, a car crash, bicycle crash, brain tumor, sports related injury, from an explosion or a mass emergency situation involving many people. It is important to be aware that after a brain injury/concussion, symptoms may not show up for days or weeks after the injury. Some of the signs of brain injury are subtle and may be dismissed, especially if there are other injuries at the same time, or a lot of people are involved in the emergency.

## Call your doctor or return to an Emergency room immediately for:

Repeated vomiting, double vision, slurred speech, pupils dilated/different sizes, difficulty waking up, confusion/changes in behavior, numbness in arms/legs, severe headaches, seizures, blood/fluid from ears or nose.

## If Symptoms continue...

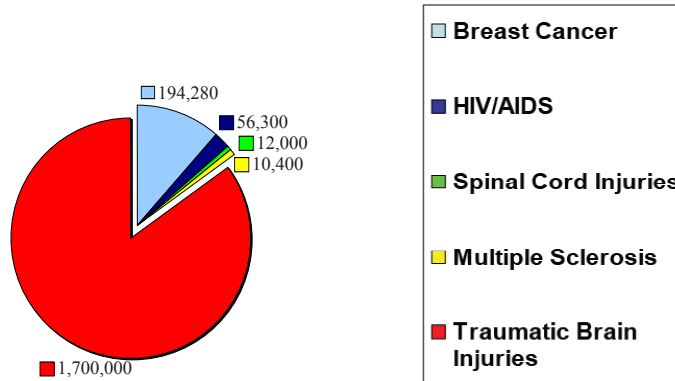
If you notice that any of these symptoms are getting worse in the weeks after the injury, you should get help. Contact your doctor to get appropriate treatment. A Physiatrist (Rehabilitation doctor) or Neuropsychologist may be able to help.

Personality changes, balance problems, changes in sleep patterns, getting confused, headaches/dizziness/fatigue, increased anxiety/irritability, difficulty with work/school, problems with memory.

# Brain Injury is an epidemic... Help break the silence!

Comparison of Annual Incidence: Based on national data provided by the CDC

## Annual Incidence of Brain Injury



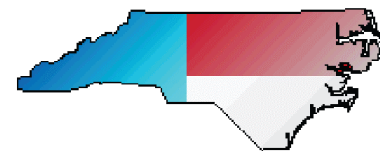
### Is brain injury a big problem in North Carolina? What are the costs?

- The average lifetime cost for caring for a person with brain injury now exceeds \$4 million.
- According to CDC data in 2007, 65,989 people in North Carolina were seen in emergency departments for traumatic brain injury and 4,000 will acquire lifelong disabilities.
- Brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability among young people in our state.
- Brain injuries are classified as severe, moderate, or mild, but all can have life changing consequences and challenges that can last for a lifetime.
- Our men and women in military service and their families will need long term support.
- If services are not received to meet survivors' needs during their early rehabilitation months and years, opportunities for improvement may be lost and functioning for the rest of their lives may be affected.
- While BIANC can't cure a brain injury, we work to prevent them and educate those responsible for funding and providing services.

### Accessing state services following a traumatic brain injury (TBI)

The NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) oversees the state's public system of services to persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and addiction disorders. Traumatic brain injury is included in the state definition of developmental disability. For more information visit [www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/tbi/index.htm](http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/tbi/index.htm)

Traumatic Brain Injury is the signature wound of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars



An estimated 188,000 North Carolinians - a little more than 2% of the NC Population - currently live with disabilities resulting from TBI



# Programs and services of the Brain Injury Association of North Carolina

## Internet Resources

[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi)- Centers for Disease Control

[www.dvbic.org](http://www.dvbic.org)- Defense & Veterans Brain Injury Center

[www.neuroskills.com](http://www.neuroskills.com)- TBI Resource Guide

[www.lapublishing.com](http://www.lapublishing.com)- Lash & Associates Publishing Training

[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

[www.tbiguide.com](http://www.tbiguide.com)- TBI guide

[www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org)- Brain Injury Association of America

[www.nashia.org](http://www.nashia.org)- National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)- Family Caregiver Alliance

[www.nccarelink.gov](http://www.nccarelink.gov)- info about programs and services across NC



**Survivor and Family Camps and Recreational Outings**



**Annual Walk & Roll-athons & Joggin' for Your Noggin' Runs**

## Contacting the Brain Injury Association of North Carolina

**www.bianc.net:** TBI Information website receiving over 50,000 hits per month.

**Starting Point:** Quarterly BIANC newsletter, which goes to 2,000 people in the state.

**1-800-377-1464:** Family Helpline, Central number for families to call. Email us at [bianc@bianc.net](mailto:bianc@bianc.net)

**Public Awareness and Public Policy:** Working to change the fact that brain injury is the least served, most misunderstood disability group in the country.

**Legislative Advocacy:** Working to improve access to and funding for brain injury services.

## Peer Support and Family Outreach Program

### Family and Community Support Centers:

- Raleigh: 800-377-1464
- Greenville: 800-697-3115
- Charlotte: 704-355-1502
- Asheville: 866-890-7801
- Triad: 336-882-1911 (volunteer center)

**Support Groups:** Over 40 located throughout the state. Call BIANC to locate a group near you, or to start a new group.

**Outreach** to medical facilities, schools, veteran's organizations, doctors offices, etc. to get resource information to families.

**Resource Book:** BIANC has developed a Resource Book that contains a listing of resources for brain injury survivors and professionals. To view the Resource Book visit [www.bianc.net](http://www.bianc.net).

## TBI Training Services

The Brain Injury Association of North Carolina provides training and workshops to help survivors, who often struggle to reintegrate into community life; families and caregivers, who frequently must increase their capacity to care for persons with brain injury; and professionals, who need to learn new skills in order to meet the needs of persons with brain injury. BIANC staff offer Brain Injury 101 classes and Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) training for professionals working with Brain Injury survivors and families.