

Contact your Representative to support H.R. 4334, which contains provisions for screening for fall-related TBI.



Action Alert!

Contact Your Representative to Support OAA Bill and TBI Screening Among Older Adults

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
September 19, 2019

Congress is now back in session presenting opportunities for addressing traumatic brain injury. Yesterday, a House Committee did just that in legislation reauthorizing the Older Americans Act (OAA). Read further to learn more and how you can help.

Dear NASHIA Member:

Yesterday, **H.R. 4334**, the **Dignity in Aging Act**, sponsored by Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA), passed unanimously in the House Committee on Education and Labor. This bipartisan proposal reauthorizes the Older Americans Act (OAA) and increases funding for vital programs that help seniors live independently and with dignity. **Rep. Fred Keller (R-PA) offered an amendment, which passed, adding fall-related traumatic brain injuries (TBI) to the list of conditions covered under the Older Americans Act.** "The Older Americans Act provides many necessary services to our nation's seniors, and I'm grateful that the House Education and Labor Committee has taken this important step to strengthen it," Keller said. "In recent years, there has been a growing body of evidence related to the problem of traumatic brain injuries in seniors caused by falls. This amendment will help in detecting these injuries early and ensuring that seniors receive the care they need as soon as possible."

"The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) enthusiastically endorses Congressman Keller's amendment to the Dignity in Aging Act," NASHIA Executive Director Rebeccah Wolfkiel said. "Too often, older Americans are misdiagnosed, or go undiagnosed entirely, after receiving a brain injury as a result of a fall. This important effort will allow states and community-based service providers to more quickly detect a brain injury and connect older adults with important services and support."

What Can You Do?

Call or email your Representative to tell him/her to support H.R. 4334, reauthorizing funding for the Older Americans Act programs, including provisions relating to traumatic brain injury resulting from falls.

You may access your Representative's contact information [here](#).

Pointers:

- In 2014, falls were the leading cause of traumatic brain injuries and accounted for almost half of all traumatic brain injury-related emergency department visits.
- Four in five traumatic brain injury-related emergency department visits in older adults aged 65 years and older were caused by falls, and rates were even higher for individuals 75 and older.
- Rep. Keller's amendment, which was adopted, added fall-related traumatic brain injury services to the Older Americans Act's definition of "disease prevention and health promotion services." The amendment also allows existing grant programs to cover traumatic brain injury screening and efforts to raise public awareness.

Contact Your Representative!

Please feel free to circulate among your constituents -- consumers, advisory council/board members, advocacy and disability groups.



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