



November 7, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 2051-

The Hon. Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education  
Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer; and Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) in support of H.R. 4334, the Dignity in Aging Act of 2019, that includes fall-related traumatic brain injuries (TBI) to the list of conditions covered under the Older Americans Act. The bill adds fall-related TBI services to the bill's definition of "disease prevention and health promotion services" and also allows existing grant programs to cover TBI screening and efforts to raise public awareness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), older Americans are a high risk group for TBI due to falls, and, account for four in five (81%) of the TBI-related emergency department (ED) visits among adults aged 65 and older. Identifying a TBI among this age group is challenging due to the similarity of symptoms associated with other conditions, which also may be present at the time of the fall (e.g., dementia, stroke, dehydration). Symptoms of TBI may include problems with memory; personality changes; fatigue; headaches; dizziness; changes in sleeping patterns; and problems with language/speaking. While age and other overlaying health issues may affect treatment for a TBI, without knowledge of a TBI, clinicians, providers and caregivers may overlook strategies and accommodations that may assist an individual with subsequent problems to enable them to continue to live more functionally independent. We are pleased with this addition to the bill.

NASHIA is a nonprofit member organization representing brain injury state government program staff and other professionals and consumers involved in brain injury service delivery as associate members. Should you wish additional, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-681-7840 or email me at [execdirector@nashia.org](mailto:execdirector@nashia.org). Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Wolfkiel, Executive Director