



## NASHIA Tip of the Month!

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### Maximizing Opportunities with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

Stefani O’Dea, Chief, Long Term Care, Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration

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Timely access to information, services, and supports are often reported as the greatest needs of individuals with brain injury and their families. Many states provide or contract for brain injury information and referral services and some states have even developed brain injury resource coordination programs. To ensure that individuals with brain injury and their families are able to find these services and/or to enhance or create these types of resources, State brain injury programs should consider partnering with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers in their state.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center Program (ADRC), a collaborative effort of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Administration on Community Living (ACL), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and now the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ Veterans Health Administration (VHA), supports state efforts to streamline access to long-term services and support (LTSS) options for older adults and individuals with disabilities. ADRCs simplify access to LTSS, and are a key component to long-term care systems reform.

ADRCs are known to be “No Wrong Door (NWD)” or “Single Entry Point (SEP),” and are designed to serve as highly visible and trusted places available in every community across the country where people of all ages, incomes and disabilities go to get information and one-on-one counseling on the full range of LTSS options. Additional information can be found at the ACL website <http://www.acl.gov/Programs/CDAP/OIP/ADRC/index.aspx>

In Maryland the Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration, which is the TBI lead agency, has partnered with the Maryland Department of Aging and the State Medicaid Agency, maximizing opportunities available through the state’s rebalancing efforts and the ADRCs to improve access to services supports for Marylanders with brain injury. The following summarizes the efforts of the lead agency and the brain injury advocacy community to date:

- TBI Lead agency, in collaboration with the Brain Injury Association of Maryland, provides training on brain injury, identifying brain injury, and information about brain injury resources to ADRC staff. Future training for ADRC staff to be provided by the lead agency will include additional brain injury topics, person centered planning, and mental health first aid.
- The lead agency utilizes Money Follows the Person (MFP) re-balancing funds to support a full time statewide trainer position to train home and community based service providers, case managers, outreach workers, ADRC staff and state personnel on brain injury, person centered planning and mental health first aid.
- The lead agency also utilizes MFP rebalancing funds to contract with the Brain Injury Association of Maryland (BIAM) to provide statewide information and referral services and program education

and application assistance to individuals applying for the Brain Injury Waiver. Agreements between the State Lead Agency and the State Department of Aging has established the BIAM as the primary brain injury information and referral resource for the Maryland Access Point (Maryland's statewide collaborative of ADRCs that serve as the "no wrong door" system of access to long term services and supports, LTSS). The BIAM is also contracted to work with the Department on Aging to include brain injury resources on the Maryland access point website.

- Maryland's TBI Advisory Board successfully advocated adding a brain injury screening question to the ADRC phone screen, utilized with all callers seeking LTSS. In addition to accessing needed LTSS, callers who screen positive for brain injury can then be referred to the BIAM for specific brain injury information and referral information. The data that can be collected related to the screening question can also help the state identify the number and support needs of Marylanders with brain injury that access LTSS.

### **In Summary**

The key to all of the accomplishments has been the involvement of the lead agency and the brain injury advocacy community in the state's long term care rebalancing stakeholders meetings. This regular involvement has led to the state's increased awareness about brain injury, important relationships and partnerships, and identification of unique opportunities to enhance LTSS for the brain injury community.

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*For further information contact NASHIA at [info@nashia.org](mailto:info@nashia.org).*