



NASHIA Tip of the Month!

Promoting March Brain Injury Awareness Month

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March is designated as Brain Injury Awareness Month. Often, it is the state brain injury association that takes the lead in promoting awareness. The organization may seek a resolution from the state legislature (House/Senate) and/or proclamation from the Governor to proclaim March as Brain Injury Awareness Month. Many state associations sponsor a conference during the month of March, hold an awareness day at their state Capitol, and promote media attention to the issue. These activities are often carried out in concert with the state advisory council/board and lead agency.

How can state agencies and advisory councils/boards assist? Of course, partnering with the state association is one way to promote awareness, as well as with traffic safety and injury prevention advocates, disability advocates, and medical/health/rehabilitation providers. One way for families and individuals with TBI who are members of an advisory board/council to help is to ask that they contact their local newspaper to run a feature story on brain injury, write an op-ed piece and/or a letter to the editor of the local paper or write a blog. State agencies/advisory entities can also issue press releases, press kits, run personal stories on their websites, and participate on radio talk shows in order to provide other information around incidence of brain injury in the state and services and resources that may be available. Timing the release of a state report or state plan also may bring attention to the issue. Social media – Facebook, twitter – are other ways to communicate. Most state agencies have information and media staff to help with public information and education who can provide assistance.

What is the message?

- That the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there were 2.4 million emergency department visits, hospitalizations, or deaths associated with TBI alone or in combination with other injuries in the U.S. in 2009. *TBI is an injury of significance!*
- About 75% of TBIs that occur each year are concussions or other forms of mild TBI. *Be aware of symptoms!*
- Disability-related symptoms may include problems with memory, thinking, speaking, emotions, personality, sensory and mobility – *which may impact the ability to conduct activities of daily living, and to return to school, home, work and community without assistance and supports.*
- Resources and assistance are available in the state to help. Call# _____

NASHIA will join the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force on March 12th, 2014, in Washington, DC to celebrate and to promote brain injury awareness through a Fair, briefing and a reception. If you can't join us, you can still contact your Representative and Senators to invite them to the events and talk to them about how they can help this important issue by supporting the TBI Act Reauthorization; funding for research through the NIDRR TBI Model Systems and NIH; and funding for CDC and HHS/HRSA TBI Act Programs (State Grant and Protection and Advocacy Grants).

For further information contact NASHIA at info@nashia.org.