

## 2015 Highlights of Pennsylvania's Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board



### *Programs, Activities and Supports*

The Department of Health formed the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board to support the responsibilities essential to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Planning and Implementation Grant process. The TBI Advisory Board began in 2000, and is comprised of a variety of stakeholders representing: State agencies and offices; TBI programs and providers; as well as people who have sustained a TBI and family members. The Department has continued to support the TBI Advisory Board while utilizing HRSA funding for other TBI programming.

### **Pennsylvania Statistics:**

- **245,621** people are living with brain injury related disabilities;
- **2,223** die from brain injuries each year;
- **10,463** are hospitalized each year after a brain injury;
- **49,505** are seen in the Emergency Room following a brain injury each year;
- **35,975** Pennsylvania children (19 or under) have sports-related brain injuries;
- **8,612** Pennsylvanians each year sustain long term/life-long disabilities from BI.

**Is TBI Preventable?** More than 85% of all TBIs are preventable by the following:

- Seat belts are 57% effective in preventing traumatic and fatal brain injuries;
- Properly fitted helmets reduce the risk of brain injuries by 88%;
- Over half of all brain injuries are related to alcohol and drug abuse; and
- More than one-third of teen driver fatalities involve speeding.

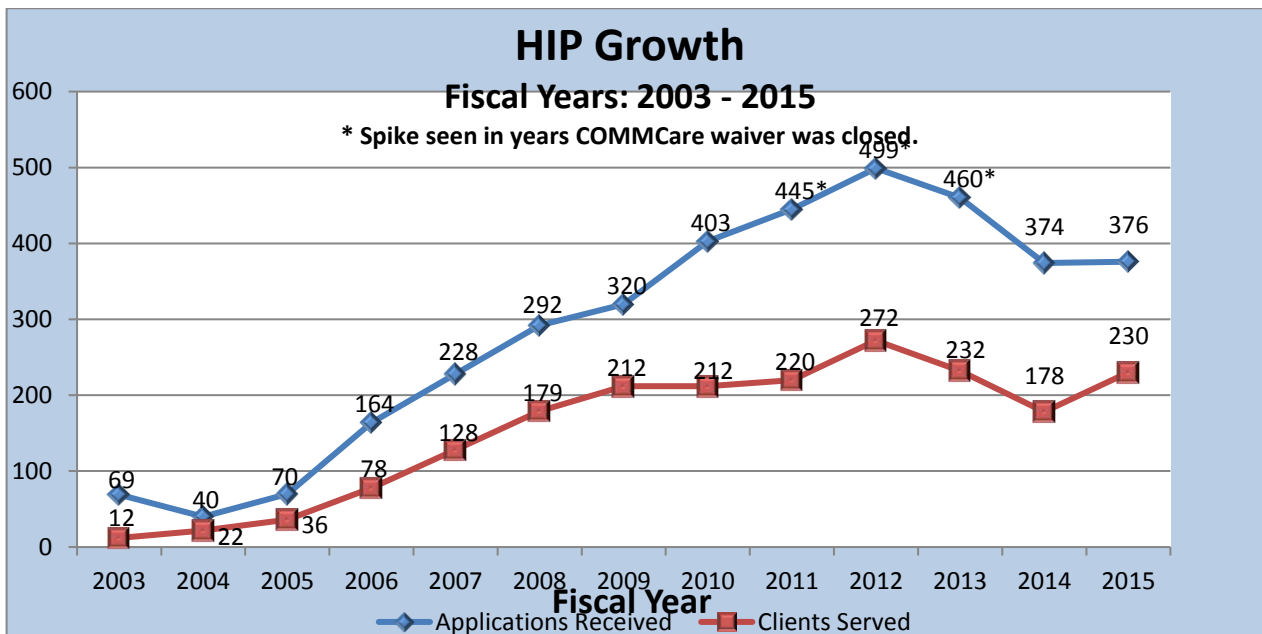
### **Health Resources and Services Administration – HRSA Grants**

- In 2014, the Department was awarded a new 4 year TBI grant from HRSA. As part of the new grant cycle, the Department has partnered with the Brain Injury Association of PA (BIAPA) to implement a screening initiative at juvenile detention facilities and to educate staff at these centers on the topic of brain injury. Additionally, the Department has partnered with the PA Athletic Trainers' Society (PATS) to deliver education and training to individuals involved with youth athletics. PATS will also deliver training to physicians to enhance their knowledge on the topic of concussion. [PATS ConcussionWise programs](#)
- As part of the HRSA grant, the Department and BIAPA have partnered with the Juvenile Justice system and are piloting a program in the Bucks and Montgomery Counties juvenile detention centers. This program will provide screening of detainees to identify individuals who may have sustained a brain injury, with

further neuro-cognitive assessment and resource facilitation provided to this younger population. This project grew out of the finding in the adult prison project that found that 75% of inmates who had brain injury, sustained their brain injuries as children, and that they had sustained multiple, mild brain injuries that were undiagnosed and treated.

### Head Injury Program

The Head Injury Program (HIP) was created in 1988 by the Emergency Medical Services Act of 1985 and pays for head injury rehabilitation services for people with a TBI who qualify. Enrolled individuals may receive up to 12 months or \$100,000 for rehabilitation services, followed by a maximum of six consecutive months or \$1,000 for case management to assist with transition out of the HIP. The goal of the program is to help individuals with a TBI live independently in their homes and communities. Referencing the chart below, **in 2015, there were 230 individuals served.** HIP funding continues to decrease, to 4.9 million in 2014/2015 (was 5.1 million in FY 2103/2014; 5.5 million in FY 2012/2013). In 2015, there was an increase in outpatients served, which helped to stretch the funding dollars as those services often do not require the full funding allocation.



### COMMCare Waiver (Dept. of Human Services/Office of Long Term Living):

The COMMCare Waiver provides long term supports and services to individuals with traumatic brain injury who meet defined eligibility criteria. The waiver reopened in the fall of 2013, and 776 individuals received services in 2015. OLTL plans to consolidate the waivers for long term supports and services and move them into Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). The goal is to provide more effective and efficient services, with the first phase of the roll out occurring in Southwest PA on January 1, 2017. Provider and consumer groups have been actively providing

feedback to OLTL about the assessment and enrollment process and the definitions of services to be provided, and have also been meeting with prospective MCOs to provide education regarding the unique needs of the brain injury population. It is unclear how these changes will impact individuals with brain injury.

### **BrainSTEPS – Child & Adolescent Brain Injury School Re-Entry Program:**

[www.brainsteps.net](http://www.brainsteps.net) #1-724-944-6542

BrainSTEPS (Strategies Teaching Educators, Parents, and Students) – is an educational initiative through statewide Intermediate Units (IUs). It was created by the PA Department of Health in 2007 and is jointly funded by the PA Department of Health and the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education via the PaTTAN network. BrainSTEPS supports children and adolescents who have sustained/acquired brain injuries by offering training and consultation to school staff.

- 31 BrainSTEPS teams with 276 educational consultants from IUs, school districts and medical rehabilitation facilities
- 587 new students **served** in 2015
- Over 3,455 students served since inception of program
- Most prevalent ages at injury are 14 and 15 year olds
- Students have been referred from all 67 counties, from 464 different school districts, including cyber, charter, private and parochial.
- Formed and trained a total of 1,060 **Return to Learn Concussion Management Teams** across the Commonwealth which are specialized to help triage concussion on the front end, academically. If symptoms persist beyond 4 weeks, the student is referred to a BrainSTEPS team for continued brain injury consultation.

### **The Pennsylvania Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Program:**

<http://www.pennstatehershey.org/web/shakenbaby> #1- 717-531-7498

Based at Penn State Hershey Medical Center & Penn State Children’s Hospital, this program is funded under the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant and partners with the Department of Health is aimed at reducing the incidence of infant abusive head trauma. This education and prevention training curriculum is required to be provided to every newborn’s father and mother in every children’s and birthing hospital/birthing center in PA. **The program conducted over 100 professional in-service presentations and hospital site visits to over 62 locations across the Commonwealth in 2015, reaching a total of 1,981 health care professionals.**

### **Public Awareness:**

- **Brain Injury Resource Line (BIRL) #1-800-444-6443** is maintained by the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania. It is designed to give resource information to all who call. The BIRL is staffed by seven volunteers who are working as a team and participating in training to increase their capacity to assist

callers. Having more volunteers affords them the opportunity to do follow up on individual cases. Please ensure all are aware of the BIRL number and use it!

- **Multiple Brain Injury Awareness Days, Walks & Safety Fairs** were held throughout the Commonwealth over the course of the year. Over **1,368 helmets** were fitted and provided during these events.
- **Safety in Youth Sports Act of 2011; effective July 1, 2012** - Legislation establishing standards for managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries to student athletes.
  - Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers Society's (PATs) continued their online concussion education course for physicians, physician assistants, athletic trainers, coaches, parents and athletes.
  - In 2015, concussion training was provided to: 36 physicians; 19,128 coaches; 264 athletes; and 394 parents.
  - Additionally in 2015, 77 ConcussionWise Instructors (CWIs) were trained and **provided 24 "live" ConcussionWise presentations, reaching over 750 attendees from diverse populations including administrators, coaches, parents, and athletes participating in youth sports throughout the Commonwealth.**
  - In December 2015, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee released a report assessing compliance with the Safety in Youth Sports Act. We are hopeful that "Return to Learn" guidelines will be added to the "Return to Play" guidelines. The Report is available here:  
<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/Resources/Documents/Reports/542.pdf>
- **Support Groups** - Brain injury support groups are the front line tool for affiliation for individuals with brain injury and their families. The Brain Injury Association of PA (BIAPA) maintains contact with support groups to provide information and support as needed, and works with individuals to start new groups in the communities where they live.
  - There are **51 support groups** listed on the BIAPA website. Some counties have multiple support groups, while there are still many counties in rural PA with no support groups.

## Ongoing Activities

A TBI training, education and screening module for victims of domestic violence was developed through a collaboration between the Department of Health's Division of Child and Adult Health Services, and the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence. **TBI screening has been mandatory for all new admissions to domestic violence shelters since July 1, 2014.** Six learning modules are available on-line for continued training.

[Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Traumatic Brain Injury As a Result of Domestic Violence: Information, Screening and Model Practices - Participant's Manual](#)

## **Additional Initiative:**

- **Pilot Demonstration Project** - The Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania received funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency for a “**NeuroResource Facilitation for Prison Inmates with Brain Injury to Improve Re-Entry**” project. This project, which began in October of 2013, **focused on inmates preparing for release.** It included screening for a history of brain injury, assessment of cognitive impairments, and identifying and applying for resources that could help released inmates become successful in living and working in the community. **Approximately 76% of inmates referred were found to have experienced an event that could have resulted in a brain injury.** Of those, another 72% were shown to have moderate to severe cognitive impairments that would likely impair their functioning in the community. The majority of these inmates had their brain injuries prior to the age of 21, and had multiple (average of 4.1) mild brain injuries that contributed to difficulties in school, dropping out of school, using drugs/alcohol, and being unsuccessful in work. The final phase of the project involved NeuroResource Facilitation, which connected people with brain injury services and resources to pay for services. The ultimate purpose is to reduce the overall recidivism among prison inmates who are identified as having a brain injury. The final phase of the project focused on training the prison psychologists and social workers to continue with the screening and assessment processes. Preliminary data showed that NeuroResource Facilitation was successful in connecting ex-offenders with necessary brain injury supports and services. The project data is currently being analyzed for publication. Efforts to identify options for continuing post-release NeuroResource Facilitation are ongoing.

**For additional information or inquiries regarding Brain Injury services in Pennsylvania, please contact or go online at:**

**PA Dept of Health Head Injury Program (HIP) #1-717-772-2762 (8:30 AM – 4PM)**  
**[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/head\\_injury\\_program/14185](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/head_injury_program/14185)**

**Brain Injury Help Line #1-866-412-4755**

**Brain Injury Resource Line (BIRL) #1-800-444-6443**

**BIAPA [www.biapa.org](http://www.biapa.org) #1-866-635-7097**

**Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) #1-800-692-7443;**  
**[www.disabilityrightspa.org](http://www.disabilityrightspa.org)**

**The Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board meetings are open to the public. If you would be interested in attending a meeting, please contact: Tara Landis, Dept. of Health, at [talandis@pa.gov](mailto:talandis@pa.gov); # 717-772-2762**