

About BIAV

Founded in 1983 by families and concerned professionals, the Brain Injury Association of Virginia is the only statewide non-profit organization in Virginia exclusively devoted to serving individuals with brain injury, their families, and those that care for and about them. Over 10,000 people find help from BIAV each year.

BIAV is a licensed state affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America and exists to be the voice of brain injury through help, hope and healing for Virginians with brain injury and their families. We educate human service professionals and the community on the risks and impact of brain injury and advocate for improved medical and community-based services. Many of our staff members are Certified Brain Injury Specialists (CBIS Certified).

Scope of Services

- *Personalized Information & Referral Assistance:* Individuals with brain injury and their family members receive support and answers to their questions about brain injury through our information and referral helpline.
- *Local Support Groups Statewide:* Caregivers and individuals with brain injury attend support groups each month; we provide technical assistance and help to support groups across the state. Attendees learn from others who have been living with brain injury, share their experiences and receive encouragement from those who really understand.
- *Camp Bruce McCoy:* In 1983, BIAV started a recreational program for adult survivors of brain injury, and today it is the largest and longest running brain injury camp program in the U.S. In May 2012, BIAV will enable 80 adults with brain injury to build confidence, foster new friendships, overcome challenges and most importantly, have fun.
- *Public Policy Leadership:* We promote, guard and advance the rights of people with brain injury; we teach survivors and family members how to advocate for their needs and represent the interest of the brain injury community on state agency workgroups.
- *Public Awareness & Prevention Campaigns:* We hold public awareness activities and host prevention campaigns to increase the community's knowledge of brain injury, prevention and treatment.
- *Outreach & Education Programs:* We conduct and participate in conferences and trainings across the state for survivors, family members and professionals.

About Brain Injury

Definitions: Brain injury can be called by different names, including concussion, shaken baby syndrome, and head injury. The brain can be hurt in many different ways; injuries to the brain are classified as either non-traumatic or traumatic.

A *traumatic brain injury (TBI)* is a blow or jolt to the head arising from blunt or penetrating trauma or from acceleration/deceleration forces in the skull that result in a decreased level of consciousness.

A *non-traumatic brain injury* occurs as a result of strokes, lack of oxygen, infection, brain tumors, and exposure to toxic substances. The challenges someone with a non-traumatic injury faces can be different, but they are often very similar to those faced by someone with a traumatic injury.

Incidence/Prevalence: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year at least 1.7 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Annually, TBI claims more than 52,000 lives and leaves more than 88,000 individuals with lifelong disabilities. With a brain injury occurring every 23 seconds, this public health concern ranks as the leading cause of death and disability for those under 45.

Males are twice as likely to sustain a brain injury as females, but people of every age, race, gender and socioeconomic status are at risk.

Causes and Consequences: Brain injuries are caused by falls, motor vehicle crashes, assaults, and sports/recreation accidents; they can lead to physical, cognitive, psychosocial, and/or behavioral impairments. These impairments can range from balance and coordination problems to loss of hearing, vision or speech to memory loss, anxiety, depression, and impaired judgment. Even so called “mild” injuries can have devastating consequences that require intensive treatment and long-term care.

Often called the “silent epidemic”, brain injury affects people in ways that are invisible. The injury can lower performance at school and at work, interfere with personal relationships, and bring financial ruin. The annual estimated cost to society exceeds \$60 billion and consumers mistakenly believe employer health plans or the government will pay for needed services in a health crisis. In reality, insurance policies are geared to wellness and routine care, strictly limiting the type, amount, and length of rehabilitation available to most people.

Brain Injury in the United States

According to the CDC, of the 1.7 million who sustain a TBI each year in the United States:

- 52,000 die;
- 275,000 are hospitalized; and
- 1.3 million are treated and released from an emergency department.

Among children ages 0 to 14 years, TBI results annually in an estimated:

- 2,174 deaths;
- 35,000 hospitalizations; and
- 474,000 emergency department visits.

The leading causes of TBI are:

- Falls (35%);
- Motor vehicle-traffic crashes (17%);
- Struck by/against events (16%); and
- Assaults (10%).

Brain Injury in Virginia

According to the Virginia Department of Health (2009):

- There were 5,452 TBI related hospitalizations.
- The two leading causes of hospitalizations were falls (53%) and motor vehicle accidents (33%).
- There were 1,360 TBI related deaths.
- The two leading causes of TBI related deaths were falls (58%) and motor vehicle accidents (32%).

For More Information

<http://www.vahealth.org/injury/data/factsheets/TBI%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm>