

Brain Injury Association of Virginia, Inc.

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Creating a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education, advocacy, and support

About BIAV

The Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of Virginians with brain injury and their families. As a state affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), we are part of a national network that serves over 100,000 people each year. We are the primary source of information and personal support for thousands of individuals, families, and professionals living in Virginia whose lives have been touched by a life-altering, often devastating, brain injury. We have been, we are, and we continue to be very focused on addressing the components of our mission -*To create a better future for Virginians through brain injury prevention, research, education, advocacy and support.*

Scope of Services

- **Education:** BIAV has an extensive clearing house of information about brain injury and has compiled and created resources and reference manuals; BIAV has also conducted or participated in conferences and trainings across the state for survivors, family members, and professionals.
- **Awareness:** BIAV publishes a quarterly newsletter, is involved in a variety of public awareness activities, and works collaboratively with other organizations to prevent brain injury.
- **Advocacy:** BIAV promotes, guards, and advances 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.
- **Support:** BIAV operates a toll-free Family Help Line, provides information and referral services for people with brain injury, and offers technical assistance to a cadre of statewide support groups; regional offices in the Tidewater, Northern Neck/Middle Peninsula, Lynchburg and Harrisonburg areas serve local communities.
- **Camp Bruce McCoy:** In 1983, the Brain Injury Association of Virginia started a recreational program for adult survivors, and today Camp Bruce McCoy is the largest and longest running brain injury camp program in the U.S. In May 2010, BIAV will offer a two week camp at the Triple R Ranch in Chesapeake, VA, and will serve approximately 40 adult campers each week.

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 1.4 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Annually, TBI claims more than 50,000 lives and leaves more than 80,000 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 1.4 million who sustain a TBI each year in the United States:

- 50,000 die;
- 235,000 are hospitalized; and
- 1.1 million are treated and released from an emergency department.

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

- 2,685 deaths;
- 37,000 hospitalizations; and
- 435,000 emergency department visits annually.

The leading causes of TBI are:

- Falls (28%);
- Motor vehicle-traffic crashes (20%);
- Struck by/against events (19%); and
- Assaults (11%).

Brain Injury in Virginia

According to the Virginia Department of Health:

- 4,375 TBI related hospitalizations occurred in 2007;
- The two leading causes of unintentional TBI hospitalizations were falls (53%) and motor vehicle crashes (33%);
- 1,360 TBI related deaths occurred in 2007;
- The two leading causes of unintentional TBI related deaths were motor vehicle crashes (58%) and falls (32%).

For More Information

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

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