

Brain Injury Association of Virginia

Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Service Providers

2020 Legislative Needs Statement

WHAT:

\$400,000 for 2 yr pilot program to conduct a prevalence study of the rates of traumatic brain injury (TBI) among those who have experienced domestic violence, provide technical assistance to the staff working with complex cases, and develop effective TBI treatment and response options for clients and providers

PATRONS AND ITEM NUMBERS:

Del Dawn Adams: **HB30; Item 339#7h**

Sen Ghazala Hashmi: **SB30; Item 339#4s**

WHY:

Undiagnosed and unrecognized brain injury is a risk factor for homelessness, involvement with the justice system and mental health challenges, and has been called the hidden cause of social failure. Several research articles have stated soldiers returning from war and athletes are regularly diagnosed with TBI, and many subsequently receive support and services for the condition. But domestic violence survivors have been largely left out of the picture. According to recent research:

- Warren (2016): Rates of TBI in women seen in the ER or in DV shelters is between 30 and 74 %; most occur from a direct blow to the head or from strangulation, which causes loss of oxygen to the brain.
- Zieman et al (2017): 81% of 115 patients reported loss of consciousness at the time of a domestic assault; only 21% sought medical help.
- Durand (2017): 71% of study participants reported more than three TBIs and 75% had no subsequent follow-up for their TBI
- Sobowale (2019): 62% of the women had sustained their brain injury through domestic violence, and 33% had sustained their first injury prior to their first offence.
- Gorgens (2019) as many as **90%** of women seeking emergency or shelter services for domestic violence report have had a TBI

HOW:

DARS will contract with the Brain Injury Association of Virginia to work with 4 DV shelters and 4 brain injury service providers across Virginia to conduct screenings for TBI with current clients and new intakes.

OUTCOMES:

Early intervention can change the trajectory of lives of vulnerable individuals; this project will bring help, hope and healing to women who screen positive for brain injury. This project will include the development of screening and treatment protocols, brain injury education, and data collection and analysis culminating in a report for the General Assembly on the study findings and further action. Possible outcomes could include:

- Referrals for comprehensive treatment for TBI symptoms, including but not limited to headache treatment, neuropsychiatry and neuropsychology and cognitive therapy to engage and support those individuals affected and help these women better understand and manage their brain injury symptoms
- Working collaboratively with DARS, DCJS and DJJ to develop specific plans for TBI screening and education for offender pathways and treatment programs
- Transition services for released persons that include specialized brain injury case management services and assistance with placement into community treatment programs