

Congressional Brain Injury Task Force

NEWSLETTER

111th Congress

May 2010

The **Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Newsletter** aims to educate and promote awareness of brain injury, one of the driving missions of the Task Force. Below you will find recent legislative activity, studies and reports, media coverage, and events related to traumatic brain injury (TBI). We believe that knowledge and information can inspire the change needed to improve the lives of individuals suffering from TBI.

As you may already know, TBI is the leading cause of death and disability among young Americans in the United States and has been named the signature wound of the War in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 1.7 million deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits related to traumatic brain injury (TBI) occur in the United States each year. TBIs contribute to nearly a third or 30.5 percent of injury-related deaths here in the United States.

We hope that you and your staff find this newsletter informative. Please contact Rose Hacking (rose.hacking@mail.house.gov; 5-5751) in Rep. Pascrell's office or Becky Wolfkiel (rebeccah.wolfkiel@mail.house.gov; 5-5836) in Rep. Platts' office, if you have questions about any of the information included in the newsletter, would like more information about the Task Force, or would like to join.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Co-Chair

Todd Russell Platts
Co-Chair

Note: Membership to the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force is open only to Senators and Members of Congress.

Legislative Accomplishment

On May 27th, the Pascrell-Platts-Andrews-Cole-Ortiz-Wilson-Coffman Amendment to properly screen our soldiers for brain injury was added to the FY2011 Department of Defense Authorization bill. [Click here for more information.](#)

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Current Initiatives/Letters

— [Gathering Cosponsors for The ConTACT Act \(H.R. 1347\):](#)

The Task Force is urging members to help protect the health and safety of their young athletes by cosponsoring the ConTACT Act, to equip schools and coaches with the tools to respond to concussions.

In 2008, Ryne Dougherty, a 16-year-old from Montclair, New Jersey, died from a brain hemorrhage after returning to play football without fully recovering from a concussion sustained earlier in the season.

Unfortunately, many of us may know a similar story of a young athlete that has died or sustained a life-long disability from a head injury while playing a school sport.

In fact, 3.8 million sports- and recreation-related concussions—a type of traumatic brain injury—are estimated to occur in the United States each year. A repeat concussion—one that occurs before the brain recovers from a previous concussion—can slow recovery and sometimes result in second impact syndrome, which may include brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and death.

Alarmingly, as many as 41% of concussed high school athletes may be returning to play too soon. Fortunately, recurrent brain injuries and second impact syndrome are highly preventable if schools are equipped with the knowledge and tools to adequately recognize and respond to a concussion.

The co-chairs of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force invite members to join in cosponsoring the ConTACT Act to provide States with the tools needed to adopt and disseminate concussion management guidelines for school-sponsored sports and to fund schools' implementation of computerized pre-season baseline and post-injury neuropsychological testing for student athletes.

UPDATE: Following a hearing in the House Committee on Education and Labor on the Impact of Concussions on High School Athletes and a House Judiciary Committee hearing on head injuries in football, the legislation has seen further momentum. Most recently, Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller cosponsored the bill after his committee's hearing.

Related News Articles:

- [Miller Joins Bill to Help Manage Concussions in Student Athletes](#) [May 20, 2010]
- [Education and Labor: Concussions Suffered in High School Sports Create Serious Health and Academic Problems for Students, Witnesses Tell House Panel](#) [May 20, 2010]
- [Eastern Oregon Football Player Dies from Head Injury](#) [May 10, 2010]
- [Girl Who Sustained 11 Concussions Seeks New Law](#) [December 16, 2009]
- [Kids and Concussions: The Effects of Head Injuries in Young Athletes](#) [January 04, 2010]
- [Kids Competing Too Soon After Concussions](#) [January 21, 2009]

— **Helping Soldiers with TBI Access Cognitive Rehabilitation:**

Roughly 1 of out 5 (20%) veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom experience traumatic brain injury. (2008 RAND study, *the Invisible Wounds of War*)

Therefore, as service members return home, many need ongoing care for mild, moderate, or severe traumatic brain injury (TBI), *but of soldiers who reported having a traumatic brain injury, only 43% were evaluated by a physician*

In September 2008, the task force led the charge by submitting a letter to Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, requesting that TRICARE cover cognitive rehabilitation therapies for returning service personnel. Over 65 House Members signed this important letter.

Furthermore, in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2010, Senator Bayh included language requiring a large-scale study of cognitive rehabilitation research in hopes of proving its benefit and getting DoD and Tricare to cover this treatment.

STATUS: The Task Force is awaiting the results of the study and the Department of Defense's response.

Related News Articles:

- [Brain Injury Association of America Urges President Obama to Include Cognitive Rehabilitation for Returning Service Members as a Part of TRICARE Coverage](#) [June 10, 2009]
- [Cognitive Rehab Helps People with Acquired Brain Injury](#) [January 13, 2009]
- [Bayh and Obama Seek to Broaden Treatment for Signature Injury of Iraq, Afghanistan Wars](#) [August 4, 2008]

— **Purple Heart and TBI:**

In January 2009, the Pentagon decided against awarding the Purple Heart to war veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because it is not a physical wound.

Following this announcement, Co-Chairs of the Task Force, Congressman Pascrell and Congressman Platts, wrote to Secretary Gates inquiring into the military's position on TBI victims, which is obviously a physical wound, even while sometimes not visibly apparent.

Furthermore, in the fiscal 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, Congressman Pascrell and Congressman Platts inserted language requiring Defense Secretary Robert Gates to review the policies surrounding the eligibility and the awarding of the Purple Heart to service members who sustain TBI.

Status: The Department of Defense was to report back to Congress by March 31. The Task Force has yet to receive their report or recommendations.

Related News Articles:

- [Iraq Vet is Still Fighting, Now for a Purple Heart](#) [July 13, 2009]
- [Pascrell Questions Purple Heart Limitations for TBI Survivors](#) [January 8, 2009]

Appropriations

Domestic TBI Program



Traumatic Brain Injury Act Appropriations FY 1997 - 2010

		FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999 - 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011 Request
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION	National Center for Injury Prevention & Control	\$2.6 million	\$2.812 million	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$4 million	\$5.2 million	\$5.715 million	\$5.3 million	\$5.3 million	\$5.8 million	\$6.137 million	\$6.137 million	\$10 million
	State Grant Program	\$2.857 million	\$3 million	\$5 million	\$6 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.475 million	\$5.94 million	\$5.94 million	\$5.934 million	\$6 million	\$6.24 million	\$8 million
HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION	Protection & Advocacy Services				\$1.5 million	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$2.97 million	\$2.97 million	\$2.92 million	\$3 million	\$3.05 million	\$4 million

Prepared by Brain Injury Association of America. Contact Sarah D'Orsie, Director of Government Affairs, 703.761.0750 ext. 637.

Military (DoD/VA)

- FY2011 Requested: \$920 million to care for wounded warriors with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health (PH) issues and to improve research into these critical areas.
- **Total: \$1.73 billion** for psychological health and traumatic brain injury since 2007.
- **2010:** Base \$380 million
- **2009:** Base \$300 million above budget request, Supplemental \$75 million
- **2008:** Base \$0, Supplemental \$75 million
- **2007:** Base \$0, Supplemental \$900 million (avail till 9/20/08), \$300 mill for research and \$600 mil for access/treatment
- **1992:** The creation of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

Recent Legislative Activity/Events

May 24, 2010 **Judiciary Committee Hearing** on Key Issues Related to the Identification and Prevention of Head Injuries in Football

May 20, 2010—**Education and Labor Committee Hearing** on “the Impact of Concussions on High School Athletes.”

May 5, 2010—**Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Hearing** on "Oversight Hearing: TBI (traumatic brain injury) - Progress in Treating the Signature Wound of the Current Conflicts."

April 20, 2010—**House Armed Services Committee Hearing** on implementation of the requirement to provide a medical examination before separating members diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and the capacity of the Department of Defense to provide care to PTSD cases. [Congressman Pascrell spoke at the hearing]

March 17, 2010—**The Annual Brain Injury Awareness Day Fair** put on by the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force

Participants: Washington Redskins General Manager Bruce Allen; James Kelly, director of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence; Richard Hunt, director of the Division of Injury Response at the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; Peter Patrick, director of pediatric psychology/ neuropsychology at the Kluge Children's Rehabilitation Center at the University of Virginia Children's Hospital; Robert Stern, co-director of the Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy at Boston University School of Medicine; and former NFL player John Booty.

Reception sponsored by: The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators, National Disability Rights Network, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center and Carepath.

Recent Media Coverage

Domestic

- [A Dangerous Game: NFL's Debt to Players with Brain Injury](#) [April 9, 2010]
- [Tracking Impact of Traumatic Brain Injuries](#) [March 17, 2010]
- [Mild Traumatic Brain Injury, Not So Mild After](#) All [February 19, 2010]

Military

- [Earmark for Veteran's Care](#) [May 3, 2010, Filner pushes for 15 percent of all war funding to go towards veteran treatment]
- [Institute \(of Medicine\) Urges Study on Care of Troops with Brain Injuries](#) [April 1, 2010]
- [Traumatic Brain Injury: Long-Term Plan Urged to Care for Iraq, Afghan Veterans](#) [March 31, 2010]
- [Pentagon Focuses on Brain Trauma](#) [March 1, 2010]
- [DoD Asked to Consider Purple Heart for TBI](#) [October 09, 2009]

Recent Studies and Reports

- [**Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation: New Research May Help Patients with Memory Loss from Brain Injuries**](#)
 - [**Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment: HDNet World Report Investigates a New and Promising Treatment for Soldiers With Traumatic Brain Injuries**](#)
 - [Military Plans to Test Brain-Injury Therapy \(Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment\)](#)
 - [**Progesterone Treatment: Progesterone to the Rescue; Female Hormone's Effect on Brain Injuries Shows Promise**](#)
 - [BHR Pharma Announces Phase 3 SyNAPSe Study of Progesterone as a Neuroprotective Agent for Traumatic Brain Injury](#)
 - [**Videogame-Based Therapies: Novel Therapy Provides Treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury**](#)
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