

The Connecticut Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes for April 10, 2007

Mission Statement

- The mission of the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisor Committee is to:
- Ensure that the needs of individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families are addresses.
- Ensure that programs and services for persons with brain injuries support optimal growth or the potential for each individual and the aggregate.
- Monitor progress made towards the development of an integrated, coordinated service delivery system.
- Provide oversight to the implementation of the action Plan and suggest changes, when necessary, to the plan based on the needs of people with Traumatic Brain Injury.

Meeting began with introductions around the room starting with the specially invited guest speakers; the Commissioner from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Linda Schwartz, the Health Care Service Administrator also from the DVA, Margaret Concannon.

Followed by: Craig Sears, Suzanne Parr, Julie Peters, Susan Werboff, Carrie Kramer, B.A. Sage, Joan Volpe, John Molochko, Charley Lyons, Billye Simmers, Amy Palmer, Gary Allen, Dan Bannish, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Christine Fortoneto, John Sandford, Jim Culberssow, & Amanda Mangene.

John started off by highlighting his hand out, "12 steps to TBI Statewide Advisory Board/ Council Wellness". He drew attention to the mission statements listed in the Appendix, followed by the comment that we **will be re-wording our own at some point.**

The minutes from the last TBI Advisory Council meeting were read & passed.

Commissioner Swartz prefaced the discussion period by saying,

- "TBI is the signature injury of this war".
- The State Veterans' Department's motto is: "TO SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE".
- She feels it is critically important to know how to treat those with TBI.
- There is a need for complete & full knowledge about brain injury prior to care.
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is similar to TBI and it is not picked up readily.
- Between now & September 1000 soldiers will be returning to Connecticut.
- She said that there are 50000 casualties from this war and that many have TBI while most have PTSD.
- During a recent dialogue with Governor Jodi Rell the Commissioner was told that she wants to make sure that any soldier needing help ought to get it & that she was also instructed to "do whatever it takes" to make sure that the help is given.

- Many of the veterans realize that they will need long term care however, “they are not into basket weaving”.
- The Commissioner relayed a story of two recently deployed Marines, one from Waterbury and one from East Hartford. During the 3 day demobilization period as well as the 18 month discharge process the families were faced with how to care for these Marines. One family had no money during this lengthy process. While one soldier’s mother was so afraid to leave her son alone at home, she’d go back during her lunch hour but due to unavoidable delays in returning to work, she ultimately lost her job.
- Much discussion then revolved around the State versus Federal VA’s service structure.
- The State VA is not held by the same constraints as the Feds.
- The State VA could have been talking to us about how to help that family.
-

Commissioner Swartz then asked how this Advisory committee be of help to the VA, how can we help promote care. She expressed feeling that this TBI Advisory committee & the VA can DO some mighty fine things.

At that point John suggested (after clarifying this approach with Amanda first) that we form a sub committee and develop an Action Plan.

Those interested in becoming involved include: John Sandford, Joan Volpe, Susan Werborff, Billye Simmers, Carrie Kramer, Gary Allen, Maggie Concannon & Sage

The Action Plan decided upon at that time will include a study of & recommendations on how the needs of returning soldiers with TBI can be best served. This sub-committee will be asked to report their findings in 3 months. This group will develop a unified version of dispensing TBI information & utilizing a screening tool to diagnose TBI. Mention was made on how the administration & timing of this tool is very important.

Dan Bannish commented on how he & the Department of Corrections is trying to come up with a screening tool (in an electronic format) that can be transferable to other agencies such as; BIAC, VA, & DMHAS without reducing individuals to TBI solely. While also being mindful that co-occurring issues will have to be addressed too.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a) Coordination Committee = Billye Simmers relayed that the group got together on 3/13/07. A memo has been put in place to create collaboration to develop a smoother transition from the Department of Children & Family Services & the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (for children with TBI). She went onto say how the Department of Education will be developing a packet of TBI related info to increase awareness to & for the families.

- b) Cultural Competence Committee = Amanda Mangene reported on how the 60 ft. brain injury banner is now currently being displayed across Main St. in Manchester & that 50 posters duplicating this banner have been created. These can be made available for the asking. Once again, Amanda asked for suggestions on where to display the banner as well as the posters. The next committee mtg. will be held on Monday April 16th.
- c) Screening Tool Committee = No report at this time though this body will meet on Tuesday May 29th & again on Wednesday June 27th.
- d) Minimum Standards Committee = No report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Communication issues were discussed & the following questions/comments resulted:

- ★ This HRSHA grant was given to the Department of Social Services & the Advisory Committee is a **separate** component...
- The forum needs to be open enough to air concerns
- Clarity regarding the “needed guarantee” issued by DSS (to provide a language line) prior to BIAC’s contact # being listed on the banner
- The structure of the various sub-committees as a whole needs clarification
 - How are we going to function?
 - Who has what role?
 - Is each committee required to provide a summary report yearly?
- Can we get legislative support concerning waiver service to extend to non-waiver eligible individuals?
- Where are the monies for this effort?
- How can we access it?
- Who would manage the money?
- What do we want as a strategic plan?

Other NEW BUSINESS:

The National Brain Injury Awareness month was in March & Carrie Kramer handed out information concerning that from the Brain Injury Association of America. The Brain Injury Association of Connecticut’s 25th Anniversary issue of the Signal was handed out also.

Before concluding this meeting John passed out CD’s with the 12 steps to TBI Statewide Advisory Board/Council Wellness.

NEXT MEETING DATES: JUNE 12 & OCTOBER 16, 2007