



PRESS RELEASE

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Florida Department of Health releases five-year strategic plan for traumatic brain injury system of care

Tallahassee, FL—The Florida Department of Health Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program would like to announce the release of Florida’s first comprehensive strategic plan for the traumatic brain injury (TBI) system of services and support, *Florida’s Five-Year Strategic Plan: Enhancing the Traumatic Brain Injury System of Care*. The plan was developed in response to a 2007 needs and resources assessment of Florida’s TBI survivors, their families and service providers. This plan is viewed as the building block to move Florida toward its vision of ensuring that all of Florida’s survivors of TBI and their families have access to and are served by a comprehensive system of services and supports.

Currently, more than 210,000 people in Florida are currently living with a TBI-related disability. The number of Floridians living with TBI-related disabilities is projected to increase to nearly 260,000 by 2020. These estimates do not include the impact of TBI on Florida’s returning service men and women, for whom brain injury has been labeled the “signature wound.” In 2005, 93,000 TBIs occurred in Florida, leading to more than 71,000 emergency department visits and nearly 18,000 hospitalizations. Falls were the leading cause of injury.

More than 30 survivors, family members and key stakeholders convened in Oct. 2007 to determine key strategic issues for the state of Florida based on a 2007 needs assessment. Following this meeting, a workgroup of 11 members met monthly to develop goals, objectives, strategies and action plans for the identified issues. The plan strives to improve the quality of life for survivors and their families, who were essential in its development.

This vision for Florida, outlined in the five-year plan, calls for: the implementation of a statewide system for information, referral, planning and advocacy; increased awareness of traumatic brain injuries; additional provider and professional brain injury education; and the development of a long-term system of care for persons with traumatic brain injury.

Florida’s Five-Year Strategic Plan: Enhancing the Traumatic Brain Injury System of Care was completed by Project ACTION, or Assessing Communities to Identify Ongoing Needs. Project ACTION is a three-year, federally funded partnership between the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program, the Brain Injury Association of Florida and WellFlorida Council.

The plan was released on Feb. 16, 2009, at a reception celebrating the culmination of Project ACTION.

The mission of the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program is to provide all eligible residents who sustain a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury the opportunity to obtain the necessary services enabling them to return to their community. For more information, visit www.floridashealth.com, www.biaf.org, www.wellflorida.org or contact TBI Coordinator Kris Shields toll-free at (866) 875-5660.

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