

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Obey:

The undersigned members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, and other Members of Congress, respectfully request your support for \$30 million in fiscal year (FY) 2007 for the programs authorized by the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act of 2000.

Originally passed in 1996 (P.L. 104-166) and reauthorized in 2000 as part of the Children's Health Act (P.L. 106-310), the TBI Act represents a foundation for coordinated and balanced public policy in prevention, education, research and community-living for people living with TBI and their circles of support. It is the only Federal law that specifically addresses the issues faced by persons with brain injury.

The original law directed the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to make grants to States to improve access to health and other services for persons with TBI. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was directed to conduct incidence and prevalence studies and to further public awareness of brain injury.

According to the CDC, at least 1.4 million Americans sustain a TBI annually and at least 5.3 million Americans are living with a disability resulting from a TBI. The cost of TBI in the U.S. is estimated to be \$60 billion annually. The annual incidence and prevalence of TBI is higher than Breast Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Cord Injury and HIV/AIDS combined. The statistics involving brain injury are increasing even more now that reports show that traumatic brain injuries account for 14 percent to 20 percent of casualties for those who survive combat in Iraq. Despite the staggering statistics, TBI remains the "silent epidemic" in this country.

In FY 2007, we urge your support for the following:

CDC TBI Surveillance, Registries and National Education/Public Awareness:
\$9 million (a \$4.3 million increase above FY 2006)

The TBI Act and its amendments of 2000 direct the CDC to support studies in collaboration with State and local health-related agencies and universities to determine the

incidence and prevalence of TBI and to administer a uniform system to collect and disseminate data that indicate the magnitude of this public health problem, identify high-risk groups and special populations, and describe the causes of the injury. The CDC is also charged with national education and awareness campaigns and with providing information on state and community services and resources.

The Federal government's investment in the CDC's TBI Program has produced remarkable dividends. To date, the CDC has calculated and disseminated the national incidence and prevalence figures, identified ways to assess problems that result from concussion, published materials for diverse audiences, documented disability and other outcomes of TBI. The CDC is also pilot-testing the development of a National Brain Injury Information Center (NBIIC) that connects callers to local sources of help.

With new funds that you appropriate in FY 2007, CDC would continue its current projects; strengthen support for State and local efforts to collect data on TBI; improve State and national efforts to link persons with TBI to services; increase education and awareness efforts; and conduct public health research related to TBI.

HRSA TBI State Grant Program: \$15 million Request (a \$9 million increase above FY 2006)

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal TBI Program was established in 1997, and is the only federal program to assist States in improving and developing services and supports to ensure that individuals with traumatic brain injury have the opportunity to learn and develop skills, engage in productive work, make choices about their daily lives and participate fully in community life. The strength of this program has been the flexibility in allowing States to identify their own needs and to develop their unique plans. This reduces system fragmentation and increases access to evidence-based services that promote recovery and community integration for individuals with traumatic brain injury, as well as supports for families who are often the only caretakers of these individuals. Without increased funding to support funding for all States and Territories, these initial efforts will be in jeopardy of being discontinued due to limited State resources to address the complex needs of individuals with traumatic brain injury, thereby diminishing the Federal investment in these States.

Funding through this program has been the impetus for States to seek or leverage funding from other sources, such as TBI Trust Funds; General Revenue; and the State Medicaid Program, to further the goal of maximizing resources in order for individuals with traumatic brain injury to obtain the necessary rehabilitation and community supports to return to home, school and community, thereby avoiding unnecessary institutionalization.

HRSA TBI Protection and Advocacy Program: \$6 million (a \$3 million increase over FY 2006)

The TBI Act Amendments of 2000 authorized HRSA to establish a new state-based TBI Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Services Program. The law authorizes \$5 million in the first

year and such sums as necessary in subsequent years. The statute stipulates that the appropriation must exceed \$2.7 million before grants may be awarded to every state. In FY 2004, FY2005, and FY 2006 Congress level-funded the HRSA PATBI Program at \$ 3 million. This level-funding allows every state to have a TBI P&A Program, at a minimum of \$50,000 per state. With each passing year, the demands on the TBI P&A Program have grown.

A \$6 million appropriation would trigger a formula under the Act that would increase allotments in all States and ensure that each state can provide a significant program of brain injury protection and advocacy, with an appropriate level of staff time and expertise.

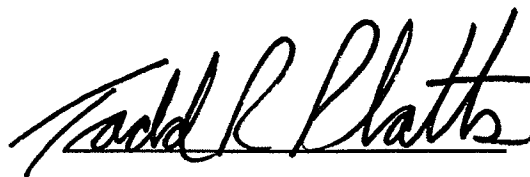
NIH: Basic and Applied Research and Rehabilitation: Report Language Requested

We request that the NIH build upon its work in brain injury rehabilitation at the National Center on Medical Rehabilitation and Research (NCMRR) to continue and expand basic research and translational clinical research on traumatic brain injury through the National Institutes on Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). NCMRR has awarded grants to eight sites and a Data Center to establish the Nation's first Cooperative Multi-center Traumatic Brain Injury Clinical Trials Network. The primary scientific objective of the Network is to identify which intervention variables result in improvements in long-term outcomes for individuals with TBI. Future funding of this Network will ensure the reproducible evaluation of existing and novel therapies for persons with brain injury to improve their quality of life. We request that you include report language to assure the continuation of this very important initiative.

While the work that will be carried out by the TBI Clinical Trials Network is of critical importance, it also is imperative that we continue to support basic research into the cellular and molecular mechanisms of TBI and the continued pre-clinical laboratory evaluation of novel neuroprotective and pro-regenerative strategies. NINDS currently funds bench science research centers at \$1 million each (University of Pennsylvania, UCLA, University of Pittsburgh, University of Miami, University of California, San Francisco). These Centers, representing groups of renowned basic and clinical physician-scientists working collaboratively on translational research programs (a molecule-to-man approach), now have developed the clinically-relevant laboratory models that will serve as the foundation for future research. We must invest in the infrastructure that is now in place. Therefore, we request that you include report language to ensure that NINDS increase core funding for each of these academic Centers.

In summary, we request your support for funding the TBI Act as amended, in the amount of \$30 million for FY 2007. We thank you for your continued leadership and support on behalf of persons and families affected by brain injury.

Sincerely,



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