

# Vision

## As We Build Our Future. . .

Projections tell us that Florida will face a twenty percent increase in persons living with traumatic brain injury (TBI) over the next decade. If these estimates are accurate, and they may be conservative considering current trends with groups such as returning veterans, over a quarter of a million of Florida's residents will be living with the results of a traumatic brain injury. As survivors of traumatic brain injury, they are likely to struggle financially, to need help securing and maintaining a job, in order to complete many of the everyday activities of life successfully that others do automatically. Unfortunately, they may even face discrimination or cruel ridicule.

### Closing the Gaps in Service Offerings

Identified in Florida's Five-Year Strategic Plan, *Enhancing the Traumatic Brain Injury System of Care* consumer feedback identifies gaps in services in three areas of greatest need. Financial assistance is the greatest unmet need identified by the survey. The second major gap area is social and recreational activities. Barely more than half, fifty six percent, said they participate in social activities in the community. Events such as BIAF's Jamboree, are one best practice model for increasing survivors' access to recreational and social activities. However, BIAF is working to help communities take several steps: 1) to increase the awareness about brain injury survivors, create appropriate activities, and reach out to engage them, and 2) to develop frequent, varied, and enjoyable special events for survivors of all ages. The third essential component of community life, education and employment, continues to need more attention and resources.

The honest feedback to Helpline interactions with survivors and their families is rewarding and humbling. Reading that 100 percent of respondents who called the Helpline said they were treated with respect by BIAF staff is a highly valued reward. Equally rewarding is hearing from individuals who say that the support and guidance BIAF's Family Support person provided helped them over what seemed like insurmountable hurdles.

## Building Capacity of Community Organizations

As survivors of a TBI are re-integrated into their community, they experience a variety of interactions with people in their daily lives, some of which may be influenced by the survivor's brain injury. If the police officer, the servers in a restaurant, the receptionist at a clinic or even the physician, are not aware of basic indicators of TBI, their encounters with the survivor may be awkward or insensitive, at best, or even dangerous to the survivor and/or result in a lack of service or an inappropriate service at worst.

Recognizing how busy nurses, police officers and other helping professionals are, BIAF is touched that they invest their scarce training time in learning how to better serve survivors of TBI and then evaluate so positively the training products developed and delivered by BIAF personnel. BIAF's greatest future success would be a reduction in the incidence of TBI.

## Advocating for the Needs of Florida's Survivors

As an advocate for the TBI Family, BIAF commits to personalized assistance, based in a comprehensive assessment by highly qualified professionals to determine the person's needs, followed by a clear and transparent explanation to the person of the available options, concluding with an effective response to the person's choices. BIAF will then offer help, as the person chooses, such as assisting with paperwork needed for eligibility requirements, navigating the myriad of health and social service delivery networks, and assessing regularly the continued responsiveness and effectiveness of each service.

This person-centered approach is, however, fully dependent on quality services being in place and being sufficiently funded to be available to consumers at the time when they are needed and can be most beneficial. Unfortunately, assuring funding and appropriate service delivery availability

is beyond BIAF's control. However, BIAF's commitment to consumers of today and tomorrow is to continue public education and awareness and to advocate for the services and funding that will enrich the lives of survivors of traumatic brain injury. This will also include a responsibility, if not a mandate, for BIAF leaders to provide outreach and education to survivors of traumatic brain injury and their families so they, as consumers of services, are well informed about public policy issues that may affect them.

## As TBI Leaders View the Next 25 Years

One aspect of our future view is to look for new drugs, new technologies, new therapies, new approaches that will treat the results of traumatic brain injury in amazing ways. BIAF commits to stay informed about the research and promising practice models, testing and applying them in Florida where feasible.

Another frame for our future view is to look to our current successes. BIAF and its partners are committed to sustain and build upon these ideas to ensure that those who become a traumatic brain injury survivor tomorrow, or next month or next year will be able to respond as positively about their housing, access to quality medical care, supply of medications, transportation, care coordination, knowledge about TBI and their options, and caregiver support.

## RETRAIN THE BRAIN MAXIMUM RECOVERY FOR BRAIN INJURY



If you or a loved one has suffered from a stroke, brain aneurysm, brain tumor or other brain injury, HealthSouth's complete continuum of "brain retraining" is key to ensure maximum recovery. Our programs offer inpatient, outpatient and community re-entry including:

- Cognitive retraining (brain aerobics)
- Physical/occupational therapy
- Pre-driving screening
- Community outings
- Vocational services
- Individual and group counseling
- Speech therapy

For more information on how you can benefit from one of our comprehensive programs, call our inpatient hospital at 954 746-1295 or our community re-entry program (The Bridge) at 954 742-7999.

### **HEALTHSOUTH** Sunrise Rehabilitation Hospital

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The Bridge Community Re-entry Program  
10199 NW 44th Street • Sunrise, FL 33351 • 954 742-7999

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