

MEMO



FEB 25 2011

Senate of Pennsylvania

February 25, 2011

TO: ALL SENATORS
FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf *Stewart*
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship – **Brain Injury Awareness Month**

I plan to offer a resolution designating March 2011 as “Brain Injury Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania.

Brain injury refers to the death or injury of brain cells and the disruption of neural pathways resulting in changes in the way a person thinks, feels and acts. Acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain secondary to trauma, stroke, post-surgical complications, aneurysm, high fever, infection, near drowning, near suffocation, near electrocution, poisoning, and other conditions which interfere with the delivery of blood or oxygen to the brain.

There are approximately 10 million Americans living with acquired brain injury, including stroke. Brain injury due to trauma may be caused by a direct blow to the head or being shaken violently and may be caused by falls, motor vehicle crashes, bicycle accidents, sports and recreation injuries, shaken baby syndrome, gunshot wounds and assaults. The signs and symptoms of traumatic brain injury can be subtle and may not appear until days or weeks after the injury or may even be missed. Mild traumatic brain injury is often under-diagnosed or misdiagnosed, with symptoms not always immediately apparent. Traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of disability and death from birth to age 40.

The cost of treating, rehabilitating and caring for the victims of traumatic brain injury in the United States is approximately \$30 billion each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 25 to 87% of inmates have a history of traumatic brain injury. It is estimated that there are from 50,000 to 125,000 mild traumatic brain injuries (concussions) resulting from sports and recreation accidents in Pennsylvania every year. Nationally, children and youth 5-18 years of age accounted for 2.4 million sports related emergency visits for traumatic brain injury annually.

Seventy-five percent of all brain injuries are concussions from trauma, which affects over 47,000 Pennsylvanians. Over 130,000 Pennsylvanians are living with a long term disability resulting from traumatic brain injury. More than 50,000 Pennsylvanians are treated and released from emergency rooms for traumatic brain injury annually. Also, over 32,000 Pennsylvania children under 21 have a medical history that includes a hospitalization for traumatic brain injury.

This Commonwealth has a number of the leading research centers for brain injury, including the Penn Center for Brain Injury and Repair at the University of Pennsylvania, the Moss Rehabilitation Research Institute, the Brain Trauma Research Center at the University of Pittsburgh, and the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. In addition, the state has three organizations specifically devoted to brain injury including the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, Inc., the Acquired Brain Injury Network of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Brain Injury Coalition, as well as two organizations with a strong focus on brain injury including the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

The best approach to the silent epidemic of brain injury is to promote the awareness, prevention and treatment of brain injuries. Brain injury prevention and access to necessary treatment and services can be promoted through community education and a public awareness campaign.

If you are interested in cosponsoring this resolution, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov by the close of business on Tuesday, March 1st.