

MAR 29 2011

MEMO



Senate of Pennsylvania

March 24, 2011

TO: ALL SENATORS
FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf *Steward*
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship –Advisory Board on Acquired Brain Injury

I am introducing legislation that provides for the statutory creation of an Advisory Board on Acquired Brain Injury within the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

In 2001, the Department of Health formed the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Advisory Board as part of being the recipient of a federal TBI Planning Grant awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The TBI Advisory Board is composed of survivors, family members, advocates, service providers, and persons working in various departments that provide services to persons with brain injuries. Through the federal grant funding the advisory board has performed a statewide needs assessment and developed a state action plan to address goals. The current goals include expanding public knowledge and providing training to specific groups of professionals, and continuing to build coordination with other service delivery systems.

While the TBI Advisory Board has been very active and productive, it does not have adequate scope or authority. The Department of Health was recently denied a federal brain injury grant due in part to the lack of statutory authorization of the TBI Advisory Board. To help address this concern, my legislation would establish this advisory board in law. The Advisory Board on Acquired Brain Injury would consist of twenty-five members who shall be appointed by the Governor. The board shall include family members of traumatic brain injury survivors; individuals living with a traumatic brain injury; representatives from the Departments of Aging, Public Welfare, Labor and Industry, Insurance, Health, Corrections, and Education; representatives of a Statewide association that promotes the rights of persons with disabilities, a Statewide association that represents rehabilitation facilities, a Statewide association that represents persons with brain injuries and a Statewide association that represents persons with acquired brain injuries; and community-based organizations that provide traumatic brain injury services or advocacy. The term of office of each member of the advisory board shall be three years and the Governor shall designate one member as chairman. The advisory board shall meet at least four times a year.

Acquired Brain Injury is a brain injury caused by events after birth rather than as a result of a genetic or congenital disorder. These events include traumatic events (such as accident or injury leading to traumatic brain injury) and non-traumatic events (such as stroke, brain tumors, infection etc.). Acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain, secondary to trauma, stroke, postsurgical complications and certain acquired disease processes. TBI is caused by a direct blow to the head or being shaken violently. TBI 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 TBI can be subtle and may not appear until days or weeks following the injury or may even be missed. Based on CDC data, it is estimated that each year over 100,000 Pennsylvanians suffer a brain injury. Approximately 26,000 children annually sustain a TBI in the Commonwealth.

This legislation is supported by the Pennsylvania Brain Injury Coalition which is comprised of the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, the Acquired Brain Injury Network of Pennsylvania, the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, and members of brain injury support groups throughout the Commonwealth.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov.