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Save the Dates for the 2017 Walk for Thought!
The BIAW will be having four walks in Wisconsin this year. We hope to see you at one of them!

Sept. 9
Telulah Park, Appleton

Sept. 16
Palmer Park, East Pavilion, Janesville

Sept. 23
Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison

Sept. 30
Fox Brook Park, Brookfield

The online registration site will be up and running at https://www.classy.org/events/event-admin?eid=134941

Want to help with organization in your area? E-mail Karl at kcurtis@biaw.org
Executive Director’s Message

I am pleased by the direction the BIAW is going, and based on the feedback I receive so are many others. We have a great deal to be proud and happy about, however….

First, the good stuff.

- We are presently putting together our sixth batch of brain injury ID cards. To get yours, see the article on page 3.
- We’re adding a Janesville Walk for Thought this year, and there is room for more.
- We grew our annual conference and we are adding a regional conference in November (see page 5).
- Reception for our TBI and concussion awareness presentations has been outstanding.
- Two support groups have re-started since the last newsletter, MCFI in Milwaukee and one in Racine.
- We have moved back into advocacy, fighting to protect Medicaid, Medicare, and many other state programs.
- We receive multiple, grateful phone calls each week from people affected by TBI and just need to talk.

Now the but…

Unfortunately, the BIAW will need to put an extra effort into fund raising this next year in order to remain viable. The situation is not desperate, but it’s not great, either. Unlike BIA chapters in other states, the BIAW receives no government funding, meaning we are completely reliant on donations and income from events to keep the lights on.

One way everyone can help is by becoming involved or making a donation to the Walk for Thought this year. Details are on the first page of this newsletter and page 8.

Do you have another way to help? Matching donations from your employer? A donation for a TBI awareness presentation at your business? Do you know of a grant we should apply for? The only bad idea is one not shared. Give me a call and we’ll see if we can work together. 262-790-9660

Karl Curtis
Executive Director

Website Improvements
www.biaw.org

Our website is improving. Please be patient while we work to serve you better.
BIAW still offering Brain Injury ID Cards

Since relaunching the program in March, the Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin had made over six dozen brain injury ID cards for brain injury survivors in Wisconsin. The easy-to-read, double-sided cards provide your name, emergency contact information, and tips to help others understand brain injury. The cards are designed to help survivors in any situation where explaining a brain injury may prove helpful, difficult, or stressful. These laminated cards fit easily in a wallet or purse.

Would you like one? A $5 donation to the BIAW is suggested for each card to cover materials, laminating and the cost to mail the card to you. If we can mail a bunch of cards to one location (like a support group) we can reduce costs. Call us at 262-790-9660 for details.

To get a card send the following information to the BIAW:
Your Name:
Your Address:
Emergency Contact's Name:
Emergency Contact's relationship to you (Father, wife, etc.):
Emergency Contact's phone number:

E-mail your information to admin@biaw.org or Mail your information to:
BIAW
6409 Odana Rd., Ste 1H
Madison, WI 53719

Help the BIAW Spread the Word About Brain Injury

Would you like to help spread the word about concussions and TBI in Wisconsin?

The Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin has prepared a 20-30 minute presentation, "It Was Only a Little Bump on the Head," covering the very basics of concussion and brain injuries. The purpose is to raise awareness among people who may know little about brain injuries, and the message is "if you hit your head and see stars, see a doctor."

Do you know somewhere a BIAW representative could give this presentation (a school, senior center, library, etc.)? If so, contact us and let us know.

Do you think you could become a BIAW ambassador and make this presentation in your part of the state? We'll provide the PowerPoint presentation and a script. You need to know enough about brain injury to give a basic presentation and answer basic questions, be comfortable speaking in front of an audience, be able to improvise when necessary, have access to a laptop computer and be able to use technology. Want to give it a try? Contact the BIAW and we'll discuss if this opportunity is right for you.
Scenes from the 2017 Conference on Brain Injury
Save the Dates!

2017 One-Day TBI Conference for Professionals
Thursday, Nov. 2, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Country Springs Hotel
Waukesha
Watch for speaker and registration information
Coming soon!

2018 30th Annual Conference on Brain Injury
Monday-Tuesday, April 23-14, 2018
Glacier Canyon Lodge at the Wilderness Resort
Wisconsin Dells
Want to become involved in planning?
Call 262-790-9660

Thank you again to our 2017 Conference Sponsors

If your organization would like to sponsor the 2018 conference, call the BIAW at 262-790-9660
Support the BIAW: Become a Member

One way to help the BIAW fulfill its mission is to become a member. Memberships are available for individuals, families, professionals, and corporate entities.

Your membership will get you a discount at the annual Conference on Brain Injury and get you on the BIAW e-mail list.

To purchase a membership online, visit http://biaw.org/donate/membership/ or you can call 262-790-9660. A membership lasts for a year, and your membership fee is tax deductible.

Thank you to the following people who have already joined the Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin.

Lisa Allen
Michael Athanasiou
Brenda Bostwick
Jessica Box
Charles Costello Family
Karl Curtis
Sarah Dechambre
Scott Folz
Liz Ford
Victoria Foston
Donna French
Kelli Goldsmith
Cathy Grochowski
Jolene Guthrie
Chris Hannis
Kathy Hannis
Gary Hansen
Theresa Hennigan
Craig Jordan
Carolyn Knight
Katie Lamprey
Adam Lenhardt
Sarah Lueck
Paul & Nichelle Martin
Tracy Meylor
Kitty Murphy
Arlene Nelessen
Mary Nichols-Dike
Jamie Niemuth
Dawn Oechsner
Charles Olsen
Patricia Olsen
Jo Pelishek
Lori Plach-DeByl
Jodee Plazek
Sharon Sauer
Nathan Sauer
Jen Sauer
Tracy Schoffield
JoEllen Spear
Susan Stone
Jeffery Strauss
Andrea Tatlock
Tom Tatlock
Bonnie Teuteberg
Carolyn Zitkus
Peter Zitkus
Vicki Schuster
Jerilyn Lucas
Catherine Hansen
Lisa Wurth

Patron Members
Jan Heinitz
Norwood Health Center—Pathways

Corporate Members
Rozek Law
Dr. Donald Mickey
Disability Rights Wisconsin

TBI Clinic Opens at UW-Whitewater

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Center for Communicative Disorders is hosting a traumatic brain injury clinic. The clinic will take place on Thursday mornings, with individual sessions offered at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and a large group session at 10:00 a.m. Goals to address include: functional memory, problem solving, attention, motor speech production, auditory comprehension and reading comprehension.

Services are delivered by graduate clinicians who are supervised by an on-site Speech Language Pathologist. This will be a collaborative effort incorporating assessment results, participant/caregiver interview and goals of each participant. This clinic is open to the public. Space is limited to available graduate clinicians/appointment times.

For more information contact us at….
T: 262-472-1301
E-mail: comdis@uw.edu
http://www.uww.edu/coeps/departments/comdis/lsh-clinic
The following op-ed appeared in the Madison Capital Times on Saturday, June 1.

**Domestic Violence, Homelessness and Brain Injury Go Hand in Hand**

*By Karl Curtis*

These days when we hear “concussion” or “traumatic brain injury” we tend to think first of football, but a recently completed study in the Fox Valley illustrates a more troubling, and less known, aspect of the brain injury epidemic.

In 2014 a group of volunteers representing over a dozen health care and social service organizations in the Appleton area came together around the idea TBI could be a significant issue among local homeless populations and those living in domestic violence situations. After planning for much of 2015 and 2016, the group conducted a study between September and December of last year. The results were eye opening.

Using a TBI identification process designed by Ohio State University, volunteers from five non-profit organizations assisting Fox Valley homeless and domestic violence populations performed TBI assessments on 179 individuals utilizing their programs. The assessment identified an individual’s history of head injuries, including the frequency and source of the injuries and whether the injury led to a loss of consciousness. In total, 96 women and 83 men were assessed with ages ranging for 18 to 70. The data collected was turned over to experts from the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh for analysis and tabulation.

Among the study’s findings was 87 percent of those assessed reported experiencing a head injury. Among those people, 86 percent reported feeling dazed or having memory gaps as a result of the injury and 52 percent reported the injury left them unconscious for a period of time. Forty percent reported they had received more than one head injury. The sources of the head injuries varied but included assaults, auto accidents and being in the proximity of an explosion.

To those of us who work in the field of TBI these numbers are not surprising. In fact, many of us wonder why it took so long to connect the dots between TBI and many unfortunate life situations.

Think of the heart wrenching stories from the sports pages about “punch drunk” boxers or retired football players who are debilitated from repeated blows to the head. Now think of a woman who is being physically abused at home several times each week. Doesn’t it make sense such a woman might have a similar if not worse brain injury?

According to the Center for Disease Control, among the many symptoms of a traumatic brain injury are memory lapses, impaired cognitive functions, headaches, extreme fatigue, depression and anxiety. TBI has also been shown to affect people’s earnings potential and living situation. Approximately 60 percent of persons with TBI ages 16 to 60 who were discharged from inpatient rehabilitation between 2001 and 2010 were unemployed two years post-injury.

Knowing this information it stands to reason a person with TBI might lack income and wind up homeless, or that a person who sustained a TBI via domestic abuse might become dependent on the abuser.

So why has it taken so long to make these connections? One reason is people with TBI often appear “normal” on the outside and go undiagnosed. The damage is on the inside, and unfortunately in the part of the body that controls every thought, movement and emotion. We expect those who look “normal” to fit seamlessly into society, but the chaos in their brains makes a traditionally “normal” life difficult.

For the Fox Valley social service workers, adding TBI awareness to their toolbox has the potential to create better service delivery to those seeking help. For example, by accounting for TBI-related memory issues they can develop better strategies for ensuring clients remember and attend scheduled appointments. Similarly, making adaptations for TBI-related anxiety or sensitivity to light and sound can make interviews and meetings more successful. The possibilities are endless.

The Appleton study is the latest example of how TBI may be affecting some of our more troubled citizens. Recent studies in Pennsylvania and Canada have connected TBI with recidivism among prison inmates. Earlier in May the National Institute of Health reported soldiers experiencing concussions from blast injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to experience mental health symptoms and lower quality of life more than five years after the concussive incident.

It is important to remember most bumps on the head won’t send your life into a downward spiral, but it is always better to be safe than sorry. As the Appleton study illustrates and as we at the Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin know too well, for the unlucky minority an untreated TBI can have devastating results. So if you hit you head and see stars, regardless of how it happened or how long ago, see a doctor. You only have one brain, and it needs to work well for your entire life.
BIAW to Join Unmasking Brain Injury Effort this Fall

The Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin wants to get the community together and unmask brain injury this fall.

Many of you have likely seen the Unmasking Brain Injury art projects from other states or from reports shared on the BIAW Facebook page. The idea is to create a mask representing what your brain injury means to you using paint, markers, glitter, or any other materials.

Ways you can help:
- Get your support group involved
- Help secure a location to display finished masks (library, hospital, etc.)
- Donate art supplies of money to purchase supplies
- Contact your local media to help spread the word

This program has brought a great deal of attention to the brain injury cause in other states, so let’s make it happen!

Walk for Thought and Picnic in Four Cities!

Registration/Donation web site now up and running at www.classy.org/events/event-admin?eid=13494!

On behalf of the Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin (BIAW), you, your family and/or your team are invited to participate in our 14th Annual Walk for Thought & Picnic which will be held on four weekends at four locations:

Sept. 9 Telulah Park, Appleton
Sept. 16 Palmer Park, East Pavilion, Janesville
Sept. 23 Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison
Sept. 30 Fox Brook Park, Brookfield

The annual Walk for Thought and Picnic is one of our biggest fund raisers each year. By participating in this annual event, you will be helping BIAW continue our commitment to provide programs and services to individuals who have experienced a brain injury, their families, and professionals. Brain injury can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. BIAW is here to give HOPE through Help, Opportunity, Prevention, and Education.

We could really use a few volunteers to help organize these events. Duties include set-up, donation gathering, and clean-up. Anything you can do helps. Please contact me at (262) 790-9660 or kcurtis@biaw.org with any questions.

We hope we can count on your support for our 14th Annual Walk for Thought & Picnic. Your support will make a huge difference for individuals with brain injury and their family members in Wisconsin.

BIAW Links with More Smiles Wisconsin Dental Service

More Smiles Wisconsin is a non-profit that serves residents of Dane County and South Central Wisconsin. We accept Medicaid and Badgercare, and they also are able to work with uninsured/underinsured patients to provide affordable care for our services.

Eligible patients are usually either on Medicaid or uninsured patients who make up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

In terms of services, they serve as a dental home for patients. Meaning they try and build on-going regular relationships with clients, just as with any standard dental clinic. More Smiles tries to provide education on dental health and schedule regular cleanings to maintain a patient's quality of life. In addition they provide a full range of standard dental services including cavity fillings, tooth removal, dentures, and referrals for more complex cases.

Finding Care

Patients can immediately find more information by going to the website, www.MoreSmilesWI.org. To set up an appointment, patients can call 608-665-2752, or e-mail contact@moresmileswi.org with their information.

Walk-ins are sometimes accepted on a schedule and by-need basis, and appointments can also be made in-person at our Madison Clinic inside the Salvation Army Building on 630 East Washington Ave.

BIAW at Disability Pride Festival

The BIAW will be participating in Disability Pride Madison’s fifth annual Disability Pride Festival July 29th at Madison’s Tenney Park. Each year, the festival brings together artists, performers, advocates, and organizations to celebrate the contributions made by people with disabilities to the local community. Well-known local talent such as Tara Ayres, Tani Diakite and the Afrofunkstars, First Wave performers Lewis Elder, and others have graced the stage in previous years. This year we plan to bring back Gaelynn Lea, winner of NPR’s Tiny Desk Competition as well as add a new group of performers. For more info visit www.disabilitypridemadison.org
United States Brain Injury Alliance welcomes Advocate Members

USBIA welcomes all those with an interest in brain injury to join the Alliance as Advocate Members! Persons with brain injury, family members, caregivers, and medical professionals are all encouraged to join USBIA and be a part of a nation-wide community of advocates seeking to prevent brain injury and improve lives!

There is no cost to joining USBIA as an Advocate Member!

USBIA is dedicated to affecting positive change through education, collaboration, advocacy, and outreach. By joining USBIA as an Advocate Member, you will be uniting with others around the country in a common mission to prevent brain injury and improve lives.

Membership can be obtained at http://usbia.org/join-usbia/advocate-membership/.

All USBIA Chapters are encouraged to share this information with their constituents. For more information on Advocate Membership, please contact Margaret Roberts, mroberts@usbia.org, or visit www.usbia.org

From the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

Call Your Senators to Protect Medicaid

On June 26, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) announced that 22 million Americans would lose healthcare coverage over ten years if the Senate’s version of the healthcare bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act, passes. There are Republican Senators on the fence about the Senate healthcare bill, which among other provisions, transforms the Medicaid program from an entitlement program to a per capita cap or block grant program with the States responsible for administration. Only three Republican Senators are needed to help stop this bill from passing.

NOW is the time to call your Senators to voice your opposition to this harmful legislation. Everyone should call, but the following States are especially critical: Alaska (Sen. Murkowski and Sen Sullivan); Colorado (Sen. Gardner); Ohio (Sen. Portman); Maine (Sen. Collins); Nevada (Sen. Heller); and West Virginia (Sen. Capito). Please share this message with friends and family who live in these States.

This proposal has significant consequences for people with brain injury who are Medicaid eligible and receiving services through HCBS waiver programs or State Plan Services. In addition, Americans will not be guaranteed that rehabilitation and care needed after a brain injury will be covered through their insurance plans. This bill eliminates consumer protections by allowing States to waive insurance from providing essential health care benefits requirements; to allow lifetime and annual caps on coverage; to charge more for seniors and for persons with pre-existing conditions.

Although most Americans get their health insurance through an employer -- not through the government or health insurance exchanges -- both the House and Senate bill would strip the Affordable Care Act provision requiring larger employers to provide affordable coverage.

Make a Call or Email Today!

You can call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and an operator will directly connect you to your Senator's office.

Sen. Ron Johnson
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-5323

Sen. Tammy Baldwin
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-5653

Remember, as an employee, you may contact your Senators on your own time -- using your own phone and email -- as a constituent. You may also want to share this message to members of your advisory council/board, families, associations and anyone in your State involved with brain injury.

Key messages:

- **Do NOT** support the Senate proposal to repeal the Affordable Care Act.
- **Do NOT** allow the Medicaid program to be gutted. Caps and block grants will decimate the program, which people with disabilities, including individuals with brain injury, and seniors who rely on Medicaid for critical healthcare and long-term services and supports need.
- **Do NOT** allow States to opt out of requiring health plans to cover basic health care, including rehabilitation, and
- **KEEP it AFFORDABLE** for people with pre-existing conditions, including individuals with brain injury.