

## 2024 Brain Injury Council Priorities Survey

### Summary of Results

- # 1 Expand mental health services for people living with brain injury
- #2 Increased Cognitive Rehabilitation Services for people living with brain injury services
- #3 Increased Neurobehavioral Services and/or Medicaid Waiver Funding for brain injury services
- #4 Tied – Same Score
  - Increased focus on children/adolescent brain injuries
  - Collect and disseminate more and better information about services including medical, rehab, Neuropsych, mental health, case management by region

### Comments for Top 5 priority areas (no matter what they were rated)

#### # 1 Expand mental health services for people living with brain injury

- Brain injury often impacts mental health and is vastly misunderstood in the MH arena with an inability to know how to appropriately serve.
- Need more money to provide more help
- Mental health is often looked at as separate from brain injury and I would like to see these two fields integrated.
- Brain injuries and mental health concerns are pre-morbid and co-morbid yet often lost in discussion. Tied to efforts to ensure screening in CSBs (and other mental health areas), this is an important area to prioritize.
- It is widely known that brain injury is a chronic condition and has co-occurring mental health issues. These need to be covered services.

#### #2 Increased Cognitive Rehabilitation Services for people living with brain injury services

- My top choice is to increase cognitive rehab services. I assume this would cover all age groups and injury-severity levels. To me, regaining as much function as possible to live a better life, return to work, save marriages, function within a family setting, etc. is about as good as it gets right now. I don't know the cost/benefit of this, but in terms of direct impact for survivors, this one is top on my list.
- Cognitive functioning and the ability to learn ways to compensate for deficits is critical to all areas of life - school, work, relationships, managing personal responses to situations (behavior management), advocating for self, engaging in community / recreation activities, etc. You could say it is foundational to success.
- Southwest needs more services.
- Very few TBI survivors get cognitive rehab. They either struggle for life or end up on disability. With the right cog rehab, these people could improve and regain dignity and productivity. Cog rehab can get people back to work or back to independence. I have seen how people's lives change when they learn about and receive this kind of help. It is transformational.

- Too few SLPs and OTs know enough about brain injury and those who do often do not tailor the rehab to the condition, skills, and education of the patient. It is time to STOP dismissing the needs of people who test "OK" after brain injury, but who test far below what their pre brain injury lives required. Without help, they lose their jobs, their dignity, their lives. Lots of tragedy and mental health crises ensue. Provide support and rehab, and there will be more lives saved and turned around.

### #3 Increased Neurobehavioral Services and/or Medicaid Waiver Funding for brain injury services

- All of the priorities are important and it was very difficult to rank them. I picked the #1 priority because I think there is a possibility of success.
- For over a decade, we've invested considerable efforts in scoping, studying, and presenting solutions to the neurobehavioral situation confronting many persons with brain injury. Now is the time to ensure that work, which presents an opportunity for Medicaid-funded neurobehavioral care, is actualized (and not lost amidst other budget needs).
- Increased services that improve individuals lives and increase independence is what I hear families and individuals want the most.
- Learning to manage personal responses to difficult, challenging and or emotional situations is critical to being able to engage in your chosen community and to develop support systems.
- Neurobehavioral treatment is part of the path to success. It is also critical to a survivor's family learning to support the individual who has experienced a BI. Neurobehavioral services need to be available in Virginia and funded through Medicaid.

### #4A Increased focus on children/adolescent brain injuries

- I think this is a great priority because it has received increased focus right now and that helps in making headway. I honestly do not know what specific area or issue to focus on though.
- So much more needs to be done to improve the overall trajectory of those suffering from brain injury while very young. Especially the under 5 group.
- I know from personal experience and anecdotal evidence that younger people with injuries are often considered complainers, lazy. etc. Also, it seems that research indicates that younger people have a greater chance at recovery than older survivors.
- Young people with injuries/rehab/recovery can be better advocates as they move into decision making roles as they enter adulthood.
- Youth should be regularly screened for brain injuries (not just sports injuries). Youth with undiagnosed brain injuries may fail in school, have behavioral problems, not graduate, not get a job, and end up in the mental health or criminal justice system. More help is needed to identify these kids so that they can get medical and educational support to help them lead productive lives.
- Kids with such injuries are at a crucial fork in the road of their lives. Society will win if we intervene and support these kids. Big bang for buck population.
- I don't think we have a lot of info on children and adolescent brain injury here in Virginia and I think if we had some this would really draw people's attention to the broader impacts of brain injury.

#4B Collect and disseminate more and better information about services including medical, rehab, Neuropsych, mental health, case management by region

- I believe the first priority should be educating people on what is available currently.
- Access to usable and accurate information is a systemic issue that is being acknowledged and there is an opportunity for improvement.
- More disseminated information is important and should be the basis for ensuring that can be enhanced by medical, rehab, Neuropsych, mental health, and case management by region.
- Waivers are crucial for community integration
- Individuals and families need to know what is available so they know how to access services.