

ARN Supports Reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury Act

The Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN) is a professional nursing organization of nearly 6,000 nurses. ARN promotes and advances professional rehabilitation nursing practice through education, advocacy, collaboration, and research to enhance the quality of life for those affected by disability and chronic illness.

Traumatic Brain Injury Act H.R. 1418 / S. 793

The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act (HR 1418/S 793) is the only federal law that specifically addresses issues faced by approximately 1.4 million American children and adults with long-term, severe disability as a result of traumatic brain injury each year. The legislation reauthorizes programs created by the 1996 law which enables the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide funding to states for brain injury patients to access treatment and rehabilitation programs. Congress has continued to fund these programs through the reauthorization of the law in 2000, which expired in 2005. The national cost of providing care for TBI patients is nearly \$60 million annually in direct care and lost workplace productivity. The reauthorization of the TBI Act will provide the necessary funding needed to develop research and improve the lives of individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families.

The TBI Act is designed to promote sound public policy in brain injury prevention, research, education, treatment, and community-based services while informing the public of the needed support for individuals living with TBI and their families. The TBI Act will authorize funding in the following areas:

- Require the CDC to create reporting system to track the conditions of TBI, identify strategies to prevent TBI, and implement public education programs to increase awareness and understanding of TBI;
- Support Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grants helping states coordinate, expand and improve service delivery systems to improve access to health and other services for persons with TBI;
- Direct the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct much needed basic and applied research on brain injury rehabilitation and development of a cure; and
- Requires the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to contribute reports with information on soldiers with traumatic brain injuries.

ARN strongly supports the work being done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The programs they support contribute to the overall knowledge in rehabilitation medicine. HRSA, CDC, and NIH's work helps to integrate disability research into our Nation's policies regarding health care, science and technology.

Recommendation: ARN urges Congress to support the reauthorization of the TBI Act and provide increased funding for several programs in FY 2009 LHHHS appropriations bill. ARN also respectfully requests for \$30 million in FY 2009 funding to continue their work to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

If you have additional questions about these issues please contact ARN's Washington Representative Jeremy Scott (202/230-5197, jeremy.scott@dbr.com).