



Senate Finance Committee – H.B. 33- Interested Party Testimony

Lauren Holly, Brain Injury Association of Ohio, Executive Director

May 25, 2023

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 33.

My name is Lauren Holly and I am the Executive Director at the Brain Injury Association of Ohio. We serve brain injury survivors and caregivers all across Ohio with the mission of creating a better future for survivors through education, advocacy, research and services. Brain Injury has become a hidden and undermanaged public health crisis in Ohio. Most likely, everyone in this room has known at least one individual that has suffered a concussion, a stroke, a drug overdose, or a brain tumor that has resulted in a brain injury. And even if you don't know someone today, you could easily know someone tomorrow—your child could get injured at an athletic event, your parent could trip and fall, you could be involved in a car or bike accident. Brain injuries happen in an instant, and the impact is often long term.

The Brain Injury Association of Ohio, the Ohio Brain Injury Program and the Brain Injury Advisory Committee came together to develop the Ohio BRAINS proposal to help strengthen the services and supports offered to brain injury survivors. The proposal suggested funding at 1.7 million, an increase from the current funding at 550,000 per year. The current house version of HB 33 has included an increase to 1.1 million for brain injury services. While we are incredibly grateful for this show of support, with the lower funding amount significantly fewer individuals will be able to be served. At the 1.1 million funding level programming capacity will be reduced by 5,300 individuals.

I come before you today to express my strong support for the full funding of the Ohio BRAINS proposal. As a concerned citizen and advocate, I firmly believe that investing in brain injury prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and support services is essential for the well-being of individuals and families affected by these devastating conditions.

Brain injuries have a profound impact on individuals, families, and the broader community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), brain injuries contribute to significant morbidity and mortality rates, and they are a leading cause of disability in the United States. In Ohio alone, the statistics are alarming, with thousands of residents suffering from brain injuries each year. In the State of Ohio, 1 in 4 adults has sustained at least one traumatic brain injury in their lifetime. That amounts to almost 2 million people in Ohio. These injuries result from various causes, including accidents, sports-related incidents, falls, and assaults.

We compared our peer states to Ohio in the scope of brain injury funding, and what we found was Pennsylvania currently has an investment of \$21.92 per resident, Kentucky has an investment of \$10.74 per resident, and West Virginia has an investment of \$1.27 per resident.

In the State of Ohio, our current investment in brain injury services is 5 cents per resident. If the bill is passed as written, it will raise our investment to 9 cents per resident of Ohio.

The lack of funding and resources not only impacts an individual's quality of life and ability to succeed after brain injury, but it also affects our state's burden of care. When individuals do not have access to appropriate resources, support, and medical treatment, they often need to seek support from state-based assistance programs such as Medicaid waivers, unemployment, nursing home placement and more. According to the 2019 Biennial Report on the impact of traumatic brain injury on the people of Ohio, traumatic brain injuries that occurred in 2017 in Ohio will have lifetime costs of \$6 billion in medical expenses and lost wages.

There is a solution--and by increasing funding to brain injury services in this biennium budget-- you are investing in that solution. We know from research studies such as the work done by Dr. Lance Trexler at Indiana University, that for those receiving community-based support services, 64% returned to work after brain injury, versus 40-50% who did not receive those same supports. The research done by Dr. John Corrigan at Ohio State University has shown that individuals living in states with better long-term services and supports had significantly more community involvement and achieved a higher quality of life.

Increased funding for brain injury programs is crucial to improve outcomes for survivors in Ohio. The requested funding will be used to implement evidence-based practices that optimize outcomes for individuals with brain injuries.

Moreover, funding expansion will enhance community-based support services for brain injury survivors and their families. These services encompass resource facilitation, transition navigation, support groups, peer support, and health and wellness programming. By investing in comprehensive support systems, we can assist individuals in their journey to regain independence, improve their quality of life, and reduce the long-term burdens on healthcare and social service systems.

I urge the Senate Finance Committee to recognize the urgent need for increased funding for brain injury programs in Ohio. By allocating additional resources to these programs, we can make a significant difference in the lives of individuals affected by brain injuries, reduce healthcare costs, and strengthen our communities.

In conclusion, I implore you to consider the overwhelming evidence supporting fully funding the Ohio BRAINS proposal. By prioritizing these resources, we demonstrate our commitment to the well-being of Ohioans and contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

OhioBRAINS Proposal

Ohio has not developed programs to help professionals identify people with problems due to brain injury and accommodate the effects in the services and supports they provide. Ohio has limited resources for individuals and their families to get information about services they may need and are eligible for. Ohio has very few opportunities for persons with brain injury and their families to share their experiences with others who are confronting the same issues and provide support and encouragement to each other.

The Ohio Brain Injury Program and Brain Injury Advisory Committee developed a plan for Ohioans living with the effects of brain injury—Building Resources and Access through Integrated NetworkS. Ohio BRAINS will provide programs that:

- Identify and link Ohioans with brain injury to state and local resources.

- Improve access to and quality of care given Ohioans with brain injury when receiving services from other health care and social services providers.
- Develop resources in local communities to support persons with brain injury and their families.

OhioBRAINS received initial funding in the 2020-2022 Biennium Budget. Programs have been developed and expanded and demand for services are continuing to grow. The programs proposed for the 2022-2024 Biennium Budget are designed to expand assistance to both consumers and professionals and introducing new programs that address the challenges unique to living with brain injury Programs will be provided through the Ohio Brain Injury Program and the Brain Injury Association of Ohio.

| OhioBRAINS Activities | Current Annual Funding | Current Services | Proposed Annual Funding | Services with Proposed Funding |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Programs provided by the Brain Injury Association of Ohio | | | | |
| Centralized Information and Referral (I&R) will provide information to consumers and professionals via a statewide, tollfree telephone hotline and the Brain Injury Association of Ohio’s website. | \$100,000 | 360 calls | \$150,000 | 1,200 calls |
| Support Groups are locally organized and led meetings of individuals and their families. This program will be provided by the Brain Injury Association of Ohio to assist their volunteers in establishing and maintaining local support groups. | \$50,000 | 135 attendees per month | \$50,000 | 215 attendees per month |
| Community Transition Program providing a brain injury toolkit to survivors being discharged from an inpatient setting to the community with monthly follow along for one year post discharge. The brain injury specialist assigned to the individual will assist the survivor and family in navigating barriers during transition and needs related to social determinants of health. | | | \$650,000 | 2,200 survivors & caregivers |
| Peer Support Programming is provided through one-on-one connections between a recent survivor and a more experienced survivor. The program will also provide group opportunities and social opportunities for survivors to connect and receive personalized support and coaching. | | | \$80,000 | 1,500 survivors |

| | | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Healthy Minds wellness programming, virtual wellness programming offered to survivors and caregivers with a focus on incorporating holistic wellness into everyday life. Participants focus on an attainable health and wellness goal during the program and collaborate with wellness coaches and peers on achieving their goal over the course of their participation. | | | \$70,000 | 960 survivors & caregivers |
| Programs provided by the Ohio Brain Injury Program | | | | |
| Person-Centered Resource Facilitation provided by the Ohio Brain Injury Connection will focus on immediate problems confronting an individual or family, often assisting them to access services and supports for which they are eligible, while providing education and consultation on living with brain injury. | \$125,000 | 80 people (in 1st 9 months) | \$325,000 | 300 people |
| Network Engagement Training and Support (NETS) will train Ohio professionals who provide services that individuals and family members with brain injury require. Includes core funding for the Star Behavioral Health Program serving Veterans. | \$175,000 | 1,640 professionals | \$275,000 | 3,300 professionals |
| Ohio Brain Injury Program and Brain Injury Advisory Committee strategic initiatives (previous line-item funding) | \$100,000 | n/a | \$100,000 | n/a |
| TOTAL | \$550,000 | | \$1.7M | |

Accomplishments to Date

- Brain Injury Association of Ohio's **Helpline** capacity increased by 100%, accepting over 300 calls in 10 months. Callers were provided over 7,000 minutes of consultation via the **Helpline** service and made over 300 referrals to community supports.
- Launched **Support Group Facilitator Support Program** and created support group facilitator training and manual.
- In the first 9 months of program operation, the **Ohio Brain Injury Connection** has served 80 individuals with brain injury or family members. Referrals continue to increase. We anticipate that we will need to add 2.0 FTE Resource Advisors in the new biennium.
- Via **NETS**, in the past year the Ohio Brain Injury Program has trained 1,040 professionals from more than 20 governmental agencies and non-profit organizations. In addition, online continuing education training is provided to an average of 50 professionals per month. Demand for trainings continue to increase. We anticipate that we will need to add 1.0 FTE Professional Trainer in the new biennium.

Feedback from the community regarding programming includes:

"For the first time in 12 years since my son's injury I did not feel like my son & I were alone. I'm sure anyone that attends any of the functions sponsored by the BIA finds this to be true." -Attendee of BIAOH educational programming

"I am in shock at the level of responsiveness and care you took in responding to me. I honestly didn't have high hopes that I'd get a response at all, much less such a personalized one. If I could give you a big hug, I would!" – BIAOH Helpline Caller

"This has been a life altering time and an extremely busy two and half months after moving into our new home and then definitely after XXX came home from rehab. Yes, I appreciated ALL your help with the rehab admissions. I am not sure where we would be if you had not stepped in."—Ohio Brain Injury Connection resource recipient

"Outstanding program with so much useful information and presented so clearly, using effective multi-media formats. So engaging, relevant and critical to helping the veteran client population"—Star Behavioral Health training recipient