

May 9, 2025

Dear Chair Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman and Ranking Member Liston,

I appreciate the chance to provide written testimony for an Amendment to HB 96 regarding the Brain Injury Association of Ohio's services and funding.

Everything changed drastically on March 3, 1972 when my then 20 year old brother suffered a very bad traumatic brain injury (car accident). Gary was in a coma for 10 days and our family prayed that he would survive. Gary did come out of the coma but could no longer continue as a 4.0 college student. He could not handle any of his own affairs. This was very overwhelming for our family. The BIAOH did not exist back then but if it did, our family trauma and Gary's adjustment would have been so much smoother.

Over the years, my brother has benefitted from various services and benefits such as SNAP, SSI and Medicaid. Even though many of the caseworkers were kind, the stress of figuring out these systems was amazing. Very, very challenging. It would be incredibly helpful for the BIAOH to have additional funds for help with transitions and to provide ongoing help with health care and services navigation.

On a few rare occasions, all we needed was simple "information and referral." But, honestly, most of the time we needed hands-on, case coordination and case management at the micro level. Information and referral is just not enough for most brain injury inquiries.

Gary is now 73 and, since 2021 has had an Alzheimer Diagnosis. I have learned that getting dementia is much more common in people with traumatic brain injury than others. There is certainly some neurological process that was triggered at the time of the car accident that resulted in a much younger than typical Alzheimer diagnosis. Needless to say, I am very worried about what the future holds.

I'm one of those family caregivers of someone with TBI who also has an elderly (age 94) relative alive. Our mother also has Alzheimer's Disease. Both my brother and my mother are declining rapidly and it is sad and stressful to handle all the health care and services coordination.

If Ohio's Brain Injury Association can offer more intensive and robust services, this would not only help the brain injury survivor, but it would also help family caregivers tremendously.

Thank you,

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