

Traumatic Brain Injury – Resources for North Dakota

Twenty-one seconds is a tiny sliver of time. In fact, it is so small that it can slip by without notice. However, for some people, 21 seconds can be the space of time in which their life is forever changed. Twenty-one seconds is the interval of time in which a traumatic brain injury (TBI) can occur in the United States.

TBI can happen to anyone at any time. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1.7 million people sustain a TBI each year. Of this number, there will be an estimated 52,000 deaths, 275,000 hospitalizations, and 1,365,000 emergency room visits. It is unknown how many people with injuries are seen in other medical settings, or receive no medical care at all after suffering a TBI.

For individuals who experience traumatic brain injuries, a number of after-effects may make life infinitely more challenging. While each TBI is different, and impacts each person differently, there are common issues known to affect survivors, which may include, but are not limited to:

- physical symptoms such as weakness, lack of coordination, headaches, balance problems, slurred speech or loss of speech, seizures, difficulty walking, etc.
- cognitive/sensory problems such as slowed thinking, memory problems, impaired judgment, lack of concentration, difficulty planning or learning new information, and so on.
- behavioral/emotional changes such as irritability, impatience, anxiety, low self-esteem, mood swings, anger, frustration, inability to cope, etc.
- learning, including experiencing difficulties in learning that previously unknown to the person.

Dealing with the after-effects of traumatic brain injury can be daunting, making it vital for survivors and family members to be educated about resources they can turn to. Family members have stated that in the early days of readjusting to life in the community with a brain injury, both the survivor and the families felt adrift and isolated. Providing information and resources to people impacted by TBI can be an important lifeline to help light the path to a new way of coping post-injury.

Helpful resources for North Dakotans affected by a traumatic brain injury include:

- The North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A) – P&A is an independent state agency charged with the responsibility of providing protective and advocacy services to citizens of North Dakota who have a disability. For more information, contact:

ND Protection & Advocacy Project
1-701-328-3950 (Centralized Intake)
1-800-472-2670
TDD Relay 711
panda@nd.gov
www.ndpanda.org

- The Head Injury Association of North Dakota (HIA/ND) – HIA/ND provides information and referral to survivors of traumatic brain injury in North Dakota. A peer mentoring program is also available through HIA/ND to provide support and assistance to individuals and families dealing with Traumatic Brain Injury. HIA/ND can be reached by calling 1-877-525-2724.
- The North Dakota TBI Partnership, Center for Rural Health, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. Please call 1-701-777-5200.