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**Subject:** March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

# Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, which is dedicated to helping the public learn more about brain injury, and to improving the lives of individuals living with brain injury and their family and caregivers.

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) contribute to a substantial number of deaths and permanent disability each year. CDC estimates that 5.3 million Americans—about 2% of the U.S. population—currently have a long-term or lifelong need for help to perform activities of daily living due to TBI.<sup>1</sup> Each year in this country, at least 1.4 million persons sustain a TBI.<sup>2</sup> Lifetime costs of TBI totaled \$60 billion in 2000—this includes direct medical and indirect costs such as lost productivity.<sup>3</sup>

This notice to CDC Injury Center's Listserv highlights some of our recent TBI-related research, awareness and prevention activities.

## ***MMWR* Releases New TBI Data**

In 2003, an estimated 28,819 persons were hospitalized with a TBI-related diagnosis in nine reporting states. For all age groups combined, rates were higher among males. Age-specific rates were highest among persons aged 75 years or older. The two leading causes associated with TBI-related hospitalizations were unintentional motor-vehicle-traffic crashes and falls. These findings underscore the need for states to continue monitoring the occurrence, external causes, and risk factors for TBI. Helping to identify these risks can aid states and communities in designing and implementing effective injury prevention measures to reduce TBI and to keep people healthy throughout every stage of life.

↓ Read the full *MMWR* article online: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5608a4.htm>

**Brain Injury: As Diverse As We Are**

In recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month and in response to this important public health problem, the Brain Injury Association of America, with support from CDC, is offering educational kits about living with brain injury.

This year's Brain Injury Awareness Month materials include:

- Five booklets that provide information for persons with brain injury and their families and caregivers
- Fact sheets that describe the experiences of four persons who sustained brain injuries
- A poster that depicts the diversity of the causes of brain injuries and the persons affected by them
- CDC's "Facts about Traumatic Brain Injury" fact sheet

↓ To order or download this year's Brain Injury Awareness Month materials or for more information about Brain Injury Awareness Month, please visit the Brain Injury Association of America's website at [www.biausa.org/media.htm#March](http://www.biausa.org/media.htm#March), or telephone the National Brain Injury Information Center at 1-800-444-6443.

**Survive, Thrive, and Alive**

Iraq war veterans are sustaining TBIs at a very high rate. In fact, TBI is now referred to as the "signature injury" of the current conflict. The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center at Walter Reed Army Medical Center serves active duty military and veterans with TBI. They have treated more than 1,500 TBI patients since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began.

To help raise awareness and understanding about TBI among the general public, active duty service members and veterans, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, in collaboration with CDC and other organizations and experts, has created a fact sheet and video titled, "Survive, Thrive & Alive: Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury." The video is introduced by General Colin L. Powell and features the recovery journeys of several service personnel and their families.

↓ For more information and/or to view the video and fact sheet, please visit the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center's website at [www.dvbic.org/cms.php?p=Education](http://www.dvbic.org/cms.php?p=Education).

**More Information on TBI**

To learn more about CDC's TBI-related activities, educational materials, and research, please visit [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm).

**References**

1. Thurman D, Alverson C, Dunn K, Guerrero J, Sniezek J. Traumatic brain injury in the United States: a public health perspective. *J Head Trauma and Rehabil* 1999;14:60215.
2. Langlois JA, Rutland-Brown W, Thomas KE. Traumatic brain injury in the United States: emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. Atlanta (GA): Department of Health and Human Services (US), Centers for Disease Control, and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2004.
3. Finkelstein E, Corso P, Miller T and associates. *The incidence and economic burden of Injuries in the United States*. New York (NY): Oxford University Press; 2006.

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