

December 2022

## Alabama Head Injury Task Force News



Jonathan with his  
wife & daughter

### Survivor Spotlight – Jonathan Varner, Pine Orchard, AL

On March 4, 2010, at the age of 21, I was involved in a Motor Vehicle Accident in which I was ejected 50 ft. from my car on I-65 in Butler County. I had a severe brain injury. I spent three months at Baptist South and two weeks at Spain Rehabilitation before being discharged back home. When I was released from the hospital, I used a wheelchair, then a walker to get around and struggled with memory, processing, mood, socializing, mobility, and double vision. I had outpatient therapies at Baptist East and Alabama Orthopedics as well as numerous services through the ADRS. I now live with my wife and daughter and am back in the community working on hobbies I enjoy, including rodeo.

What helped me the most in my recovery path was the goal of being able to get back to the rodeo. I was world ranked in the Professional Cowboy Association (PCA) Rodeo circuit and rode bulls prior to my injury. After my accident, I was paralyzed on the right side of my body (lost the use of my right arm and leg) and used a wheelchair. I had a supportive family with my mom providing direct care. To help me walk again, we made many trips up and down our long driveway. As I did therapy, I always kept my rope with me and the ultimate goal of being able to return to the rodeo. I also was referred to Montgomery Area Non-Traditional Equestrians (MANE) for Therapeutic Horse Riding that provided the ramps to practice getting back on a horse. I was in a wheelchair and didn't have a horse ramp at my house to be able to ride my horses. Once I was able to get out of the wheelchair, I started to ride my own horses & began to get back into roping on a smaller scale.

Not being able to ride my horses was hard for me since the rodeo was such a big part of my life. I worked hard and struggled often with my new life's ups and downs. But now I can ride a horse and compete in team roping again, and I love it. The advice I have for others going through the same struggles as me is to never give up and never quit trying. When I left Montgomery, one of the doctors told me I would never be able to do rodeo again and I proved him wrong. Now I am back doing what I love, and I have a beautiful family.

Your link: [nashia.org/obiss](https://nashia.org/obiss)  
Your password: al23 (case sensitive)

Or scan below to access:



New Online BI  
Screener

**Federal TBI Grant Update** David White, ACL Federal TBI Grant Project Coordinator, will be our guest speaker today demonstrating the Online Brain Injury Screening & Support System (OBISSS). The system will help to determine lifetime exposure to head injuries and to identify associated challenges that may be present for youth and adults.

### Kristin Moore, New CRS Care Coordination Program Specialist

Kristin Moore was recently promoted to the position of CRS Care Coordination Program Specialist. Kristin has over 11 years of social work experience and is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). She began working for Children's Rehabilitation Services in 2016 and most recently served as a CRS Social Work Specialist and carried a caseload that included children and youth with a diagnosis of TBI and/or SCI along with a caseload of Transition age youth. Congratulations, Kristin!



**UAB Awarded TBI & SCI Model Systems Grant** The University of AL at Birmingham Dept. of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation has received a five-year \$2.2 million grant to continue its [TBI Model System](#) and a four-year \$490,000 grant to continue its [SCI Model System](#) from the [National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research](#). Congratulations to the UAB TBI & SCI Model Systems!

### 2022-23 Alabama Head Injury Task Force Meetings

Thursdays, 10am-12pm March 9, 2023 ~ June 8, 2023 ~ September 21, 2023

## OBISSS Presented at the Calhoun County Veterans Meeting

April Turner, State Head Injury Coordinator, Tammy Lovell, TBI Care Coordinator, and Athena Camp, Business Relations Consultant, recently shared TBI service information & the new Statewide Online Head Injury Screener & Support Tool (OBISSS) at the Calhoun County Veterans Treatment Court in Anniston. The Calhoun County Court System will be the first in the state to provide the OBISSS tool to our Veterans!



The **Teacher Acute Concussion Tool (TACT)** provides classroom strategies delivered to the teacher's inbox that are tailored to teaching style, content area, environmental and student factors. Find more info on [AlabamaTBI.org](http://AlabamaTBI.org) or [GetSchooledOnConcussions.com](http://GetSchooledOnConcussions.com).

**A Mother's Rest** coordinates affordable 3-night B&B respite retreats for caregivers nationwide. A year-round respite inn, located in North Georgia, is available to all special needs moms, adoptive moms, and other adult caregivers every weekend. These free-style retreats are offered at low or no-cost through donations. Learn more [here](http://amotherrest.org).



**AbleGamers** helps people with disabilities get in the game by providing peer counseling, adaptive gaming technology, community inclusion initiatives, and working with gaming industry professionals and developers to make their games accessible. Learn more [here](http://ablegamers.org).



**Give an Hour** offers barrier-free, no cost mental health counseling to active-duty service members, veterans, National Guard and Reservists, as well as their family members/loved ones who have been affected by their service. Our providers do this by offering to "give" one hour regularly to reduce barriers to mental health care. Learn more [here](http://giveanhour.org).



**AHiF** Alabama Head Injury Foundation Programs and support groups for clients and caregivers continue to meet in-person and online. Learn more [here](http://ahif.org).



The **Adult TBI Program (ICBM)** pre-vocational program for adults served **378** caseload consumers and their families through the 4th quarter of FY22. ICBM provides individual cognitive remediation, counseling, TBI education, and accommodations to transition to community and/or employment. Learn more about the Adult TBI Program [here](http://icbm.org).

**Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program** The *Client Assistance Program (CAP)*, the state's legal service for VR consumers, has moved to join ADAP! The CAP is a federally funded program that provides information, advice, and advocacy to people with disabilities who are applying for or receiving services provided by ADRS, the state's Independent Living Centers, and other programs funded by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Learn more [here](http://adap.org).



**Children's Rehabilitation Services** The PASSAGES Pediatric TBI Care Coordinators has served a total of **383** consumers through the 4th quarter of FY22 assisting children and youth with transition from hospital to home, community, school and providing information/education on TBI residuals to families and school systems. Learn more about CRS [here](http://crs.org).



**Toll-Free TBI Helpline**  
**1-888-879-4706**

The **Registry Helpline** had a total of **221** referrals and/or phone calls through the 4th Quarter of FY22.



Visit [AlabamaTBI.org](http://AlabamaTBI.org)

The **Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Registry (AHSCIR)** requires hospital trauma TBI records be collected, reviewed, and eligible individuals contacted for needed linkage to crucial services and supports statewide. For FY22, **6,874** new records were received from the Alabama Department of Public Health and **3,435** individuals were eligible to be contacted to provide information and referral assistance from ADRS, AHIF and other community agencies.