

September 2024

Alabama Head Injury Task Force News



Survivor Spotlight – *Brittany Ray, Cusseta, AL*

I was in a side-by-side wreck along with my then husband in which I acquired a concussion and my husband sustained a TBI. He was airlifted to the nearest Trauma Center to have multiple surgeries on his head. He spent 9 weeks in the hospital and then another 7 weeks at a rehab hospital. After arriving home, we were sent to PT, OT, and speech therapy but I was not aware of all the services the state offered for people with brain injuries. By chance I met a Pediatric TBI Care Coordinator at church who finally got us the help we needed. ADRS helped me understand what a brain injury does to a person as well as what changes I could expect.

Nobody knew how to help me or even talk to me because we did not know where to even begin. I was unaware of all the emotions that are associated with TBI and the effects it would have not only on the survivor but anyone and everyone associated with that person. Also, I did not realize how DRASTIC the changes would be, from losing friends because they do not know how to deal with all things around TBI to doctors' appointments - because those are NEVER ENDING - as well as just the changes in daily life with new ways of doing things.

Something I finally learned is that I am not alone! There are so many people who are going through the same thing in different ways than I am. There are people to help, you just need to know who to reach out to, and it is now a passion of mine that no one will be alone in this journey!

Christy Johnson Retires after 27 Years with ADAP

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program's (ADAP) Protection and Advocacy for Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI) program is a crucial initiative that provides advocacy support to individuals with TBI through formula grant funding. ADAP has dedicated significant resources to ensuring individuals have full access to inclusive education, financial entitlement programs like Medicaid and Social Security, healthcare, accessible housing, and meaningful employment. ADAP also responds to allegations of abuse and neglect, working tirelessly to protect the rights of those we serve.



**THE ALABAMA DISABILITIES
ADVOCACY PROGRAM**



The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), the Alabama Head Injury Task Force (AHITF), and the AHITF Advisory Council would like to congratulate Christy Johnson on 27 years of dedicated service to the state of Alabama and ADAP. Her servant heart and leadership have increased TBI awareness and partnerships throughout the state. Her collaboration across state agencies and community resources have been a model nationally.

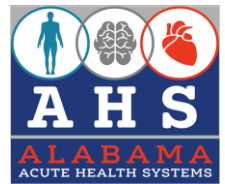
The Alabama Head Injury Task Force requested Christy share a few words upon her retirement: "The success of ADAP's TBI program is deeply rooted in the collaborative partnerships we've cultivated across the state. It has been an absolute privilege to collaborate with dedicated professionals over the years like April Turner, Maria Crowley, Augusta Cash, and many others. These partnerships have been a cornerstone of our work, allowing us to deepen our understanding of TBI and to better serve individuals in need. My role has been to equip and connect—offering education about TBI, introducing service providers to essential screening tools, and connecting them with experts to strengthen and enhance our service delivery systems. You, our partners, are the true experts. As I step back, I'm confident that under April's leadership, this partnership will continue to strengthen the systems that support individuals with TBI. From the bottom of my heart, you will be missed, but I know that the work we've done together will continue to make a lasting impact."

Christy Johnson, thank you for your many years of service, dedication, and advocacy efforts for individuals with TBI. Congratulations on a job well done and Happy Retirement!

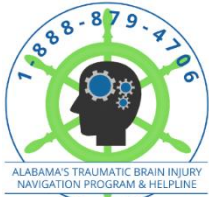
Upcoming Task Force Meeting
Thursday, December 12th, 10am-12pm

Acute Health Systems Conference

The state TBI Program has been invited to speak at the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) Office of Emergency Medical Services' Acute Health Systems Conference on Mon., Dec. 9. April Turner will discuss how ADPH and ADRS work together through the trauma registry data to connect traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injury patients to ADRS services. The intended audience for this conference includes trauma managers, stroke coordinators, Emergency Department (ED) directors and ED nurses, EMS personnel, EMS training officers, and flight nurses.



The **Epilepsy Foundation Alabama** provides programs and services that support people and families impacted by epilepsy. With the strength of a national organization and network of epilepsy experts, EFAL provides national scope and local impact. From groundbreaking research to SUDEP support, local educational programs such as Seizure First Aid, and a 24/7 Helpline, EFAL is here to serve you. [Learn more about the Epilepsy Foundation Alabama.](#)



TBI Navigation Program & Helpline

The statewide TBI Navigation Program had a grand total of **310** referrals. The TBI Registry Helpline had a total of **209** referrals through the 3rd quarter of FY24.

Visit AlabamaTBI.org

The **Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)** offerings for clients and caregivers for this Fall.

- Therapy-Based Camp: UAB Bright Ideas TBI Camp @ Lakeshore Foundation – Sept. 17th-19th
- Recreational Camp: Camp McDowell Weekend Camp – October 18th-20th
- Online Support Groups and Sessions:
 - Client Support Groups (Zoom) – Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-2 p.m.
 - Caregiver Support Groups (Zoom) – 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month from 10-11 a.m.
 - Mindfulness Mondays (Zoom) – Mondays at 1 p.m.
 - Happy Brain Yoga (Zoom) – Tuesdays at 11 a.m.
- In-person Support Groups are currently meeting monthly in the following areas: Birmingham, Dothan, Gadsden, Mobile, and Roanoke. Please visit our website for dates and locations.



[Learn more about AHIF's activities and programs.](#)

The **Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs** is inviting the community to attend the dedication ceremony of the Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home on Fri., Sep. 13 at 10 a.m. The facility is 182,000 square feet and will house 174 residents. Once in full operation, it will provide jobs for more than 200 people. The address for the ceremony is 3400 Rocky Head Road in Enterprise.



Annually, the **Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP)** solicits input from persons with disabilities, their families, and other members of the disability community to identify priority issue areas on which we should focus. These priority issues frame the advocacy services that we undertake and to which we allocate ADAP's resources. [Complete the ADAP FY25 Priority Survey.](#) ([ADAP Encuesta Prioritaria FY25](#))

The **Adult TBI Program (ICBM)** pre-vocational program for adults served **339** caseload consumers and their families through the 3rd quarter of FY24. ICBM provides individual cognitive remediation, counseling, TBI education, and accommodations to transition to community and/or employment. [Learn more about the Adult TBI Program.](#)



The **Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS)** PASSAGES Pediatric TBI Care Coordinators have served a total of **362** consumers through the 3rd quarter of FY24 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.](#)

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. Through the 3rd quarter of FY24, **2,870** new records were received from Alabama Dept. of Public Health and **1,398** individuals were eligible to be contacted to provide information and referral assistance from ADRS, AHIF, and other community agencies.